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ABSTRACT

This report describes a province-wide study in Alberta (Canada) to explore the integration of students with special needs. In Phase 1 (1991-92) of the study, a telephone survey of all superintendents was conducted to provide an overview of integration practices. In Phase 2 (1992), a mail survey of superintendents and their special education designates examined the nature and extent of integration practices in further depth. Phase 3 involved development of six case studies of schools through on-site observation; document review; and staff, parent, and student interviews. The project produced a list of critical integration factors divided into 4 jurisdictional and 15 school-based factors. Jurisdictional factors include adequate physical resources, adequate human resources, adequate training for regular classroom teachers, and a written policy on integration. School-based factors include, among others, principal support/involvement, parent involvement, written policy/mission statement, formal communications systems, reduced class size where special needs students are present, planning time for integration, and preparation of regular and special needs students for integration. Individual chapters of the report provide background information, report the findings of Phases 1 and 2, present the case studies of Phase 3, and offer a cross-case analysis. A final chapter presents conclusions (noting the frequency of occurrence of each of the critical integration factors) and recommendations. The survey instruments and interview formats are appended. (Contains 27 references.) (DB)

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SUPPORTING INTEGRATION:

WORK IN PROGRESS IN ALBERTA

Final Report
1995

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SUPPORTING INTEGRATION:

WORK IN PROGRESS IN ALBERTA

Final Report
1995

Report to the Special Education Branch of Alberta Education

by

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The students described in these case studies are real. Their names have been changed to protect them with the exception of Michal, already an advocate for students with learning disabilities, who gave permission for his name to be used. Their warmth, humour and patience are examples to us all.

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Gail V. Barrington, PhD, CMC
Principal Researcher

Table of Contents

Page

Overview i

Chapter 1 **Study Background** 1

Changes in Integration 1
Changes in Funding 2
Overview of the Study 2
Related Literature 3

Chapter 2 **Findings Phases 1 and 2** 10

Phase 1: Jurisdiction Screening Survey 10
Phase 2: Jurisdiction Practices 14

Chapter 3 **Phase 3, The Case Studies** 21

Background to the Case Studies 21

Case Study #1 1–1
Case Study #2 2–1
Case Study #3 3–1
Case Study #4 4–1
Case Study #5 5–1
Case Study #6 6–1

Chapter 4 **Cross-case Analysis** 29

Chapter 5 **Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations** 37

Discussion 37
Conclusions 38
Recommendations 40

References 42

Appendix 1 Telephone Survey Instrument — Phase 1

Appendix 2 Survey Instrument — Phase 2

Appendix 3 Interview Formats — Phase 3

List of Tables

Page

Table 1 Critical Integration Factors 9

Table 2 Valid Sample, Phase 1 10

Table 3 Responding Superintendents by Zone and Jurisdiction Definition 11

Table 4 Responding Superintendents by Region and Jurisdiction Affiliation 15

Table 5 Availability of Jurisdiction-based Factors 17

Table 6 Availability of School-based Factors 18

Table 7 Schools Included in the Sample 27

Table 8 Critical Integration Factors in Case-study Schools 29

Overview

In 1991, there was limited information available about current integration practices in Alberta's classrooms apart from the *Integrated Services Review* (Alberta Education and the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 1992) which focused on integration policies and activities in one school jurisdiction in central Alberta. It was felt that a province-wide perspective was required. As a result, this three-part study, *Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work*, was commissioned to explore integration practices across Alberta, with an increasingly specific focus in each phase.

Phase 1 of the study, *Jurisdiction Screening Survey*, was a telephone survey of all superintendents in the province to determine an overview of integration practices. It was conducted in 1991–1992.

Phase 2, *Jurisdiction Practices*, was a mail-out survey to superintendents and their special education designates regarding the nature and extent of integration practices and was conducted in 1992.

Phase 3, *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta*, involved the development of six case studies of schools selected across the province and provided detailed descriptive information obtained through on-site observation, staff, parent and student interviews and document review. This part of the study was conducted between 1993 and 1994. Because of the lengthy duration of the overall study, it was determined that this Final Report would provide a summary of the findings of Phases 1 and 2 as well as those of Phase 3. Its title was changed from *Strategies That Work* to *Work in Progress in Alberta* because of the developmental nature of most programs observed. The changing nature of education in the Province of Alberta during this period, including changing resources, changing administrative structures and, as a result, changing policies, also supported a formative rather than a definitive approach to the topic of integration.

A list of Critical Integration Factors was developed, based on a review of related literature, on findings of the Yellowhead study and on expert review. It provided the conceptual framework for the overall study and was revised from phase to phase based on findings as they emerged. The final list of Critical Integration Factors is summarized below:

Jurisdictional Factors:

- Adequate Physical Resources
- Adequate Human Resources
- Adequate Training Resources
- Written Policy on Integration.

School-based Factors:

- Principal Support/Involvement
- Teacher Support/Involvement
- Parent Involvement
- Written Policy/Mission Statement at School Level
- Guidelines for Integration
- Formal Communication Systems for Parents re: Integration
- Formal Communication Systems for Teachers re: Integration
- Reduced Class Size Where Students with Special Needs Integrated
- Some Regular Teachers Trained in Special Education
- Regular Teachers Responsible for Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)
- Life Skills Program at High School Level
- Annual Planning Time for Integration
- Weekly Planning Time for Integration
- Regular Students Prepared for Integration
- Students with Special Needs Prepared for Integration.

Based on feedback from superintendents who participated in Phase 2, a number of schools were nominated for the case-study research as examples of exemplary practices. A stratified random sample was selected for inclusion in the study which incorporated the factors of school location (rural-urban and zone), school jurisdiction affiliation (public and separate) and level (elementary, junior high and senior high). School principals were invited to participate. All but one of the original six which were selected agreed; the sixth had a change in administration and so that school board nominated another school. The final list of schools is presented below along with the dates of the school visits, conducted by both an independent researcher and a representative from Alberta Education:

Grimshaw High School, Peace River School Division No. 10, November 22–23, 1993
Crestomere School, County of Ponoka No. 3, December 7–8, 1993
St. John's Junior High School, Fort McMurray Catholic Schools, December 9–10, 1993
Bishop Savaryn School, Edmonton Catholic Schools, March 3–4, 1994
G. R. Davis School, Willow Creek School Division, March 14–15, 1994
Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School, Calgary Board of Education, March 24–25, 1994

The six case studies were prepared in the manner suggested by Yin (1989) and Barrington (1992), based on the information collected on site. School personnel had an opportunity to review and approve their own case. The case studies are provided in this report. A cross-case analysis was also conducted with particular reference to the list of Critical Integration Factors and some conclusions were drawn, as follows:

At the jurisdictional level:

- **Adequate Physical Resources Appeared to be Available**

  At the time that the research was conducted (1993–1994), adequate physical resources were provided for students with disabilities. In all case-study schools, it appeared that facilities were modified as required and that adequate funds were provided to provide appropriate physical facilities to meet students' instructional needs.

- **Human Resources Appeared to be Shrinking**

  All schools had at least one teacher with training and/or experience in teaching special education. Human resources were deemed to be adequate for students with special needs as compared to those provided for regular students. Overall, however, it was evident that budgets were shrinking and pupil/teacher ratios were on the rise. St. John's experienced a decrease in special education personnel over three years from 4.0 FTE to 1.5 FTE. Towards the end of the study period, human resources at Dr. E. P. Scarlett's Learning Assistance Program were threatened but staff were able to make funding decisions to maintain the program. Over the course of the three phases of this study, significant decreases were observed in the amount of support that was provided at the jurisdictional level.

- **Jurisdictional Policies on Integration were being Developed**

  Policies at the jurisdictional level were in progress at the time of the case-study visits. Jurisdictions which revised their policies to reflect the new provincial policy on integration, prepared in 1993, included the County of Ponoka No. 3, the Fort McMurray Catholic School System and the Edmonton Catholic School District No. 7.

- **Adequate Training on Integration Topics was not Provided for Regular Classroom Teachers**

  Training resources at the jurisdictional level were a significant issue for teachers in this study. While the jurisdictions appeared to provide some professional development activities/resources for special education teachers, there was limited or no training available related to integration topics for regular classroom teachers. Training for them was seen as optional in an environment moving rapidly towards integration. Their lack of expertise was one of the teachers' greatest fears. They said they needed additional training in special education topics, particularly in the academic assessment of students with special needs and in methods of program modification.

  Where training did occur, it was school-based and instigated by the principal and his staff. At both St. John's Junior High and Bishop Savaryn, some creativity was evident regarding the professional development which could be provided in an environment of diminishing resources. Over a period of three or four years, they had turned away from external experts towards the expertise available within their own schools and towards cooperative training activities. However, this joint professional development process over time was not shared by teachers who were new to the school. They had to scramble to catch up to the evolving school culture vis-à-vis integration. The lesson to be learned from Grimshaw High School was that inservice had to be relevant to a teacher's instructional needs **at that time**. While all junior high teachers were inserviced on working with students who were hard of hearing, only those who had the students in their classes that year benefited from the training.

At the school level:

- **Teacher Support/Involvement is the Key Factor**

  Acceptance of the concept of integration remains varied but it is clear that teacher support and involvement in integration programming is critical. In a positive school environment where teachers lived integration in their own classrooms, integration tends to be supported to a greater extent. Where there is no personal engagement on the part of teachers, their attitudes remain sceptical.

- **Principal Support/Involvement is Another Key Factor**

  Second only to teacher support and involvement is that of the principal. Principal training and professional development was beneficial for program development at St. John's and Bishop Savaryn. Principals were able to translate what they learned into programming at the school level. At both Crestomere and Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the principals had training and experience in special education, a fact which should not be discounted in the development of a positive school environment regarding integration. In these four schools, stronger integration programming was definitely linked to principal training, ongoing support and, except for Scarlett, hands-on involvement. However, while principal support was a success factor, the experience at Bishop Savaryn suggests that without widespread regular classroom teacher support, programming will proceed more slowly.

- **Informal Communication with Parents Supports Integration Success**

  All schools had formal communication with parents regarding IPPs and parents seemed to be satisfied with this role. However, more frequent informal communication was well received, particularly at St. John's, Dr. E. P. Scarlett and Crestomere, where teachers went out of their way to keep parents up-to-date on their children's successes as well as problems. Parent satisfaction appeared to be greater as a result.

- **School-based Visions, Policies and Infrastructures Support Integration Programming**

  Schools with clearly thought out visions and policies for integration were able to develop stronger infrastructures to support programming. However, policies and structures were not enough, as was demonstrated in Bishop Savaryn, where acceptance among teachers remained variable despite the carefully crafted vision, supported teacher planning and creative problem-solving methods.

- **Regular Classroom Teacher Preparation of IPPs Indicates a Transfer of Responsibility**

  Greater teacher ownership of integration programming exists where regular classroom teachers accept the responsibility for preparing IPPs. While this was the case at St. John's, teachers reacted against the idea of more paperwork. Other schools tended to have variable responsibility for IPP preparation.

- **More Development and Research Is Required at the High-school Level**

  Further program development and research about integration models are required at the high-school level. At Crestomere, some success was experienced on a very small scale with children at the upper elementary/junior high level, particularly when it came to work experience and life skills.

  At Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the LAP model supported integration without being integrated itself. It improved students' self-esteem as well as their academic development. Teachers noted that students' behaviour problems tended to dissipate as they experienced success in the regular classroom. Although these students experienced severe learning problems throughout their school careers, they could indeed learn, given the right strategies, supports and environment, and thus the program had a very upbeat tone.

  For the medically fragile students at G. R. Davis, the program reverted to basic comfort and security issues. While three models were observed, none of them could fit all students with disabilities at the high-school level.

- **Life Skills and Work Experience Programs also Require Development and Research**

  Life skills and work experience for students with disabilities still requires significant program development and research. Apart from an IOP class in Grimshaw, life skills and work experience programs appeared to be *ad hoc* in nature, reflecting the needs of specific students in a school. The tiny model in Crestomere (created for two students) had a lot of promise.

- **Assistant Involvement with Regular Students can be Beneficial**

  Assistant involvement in programming decisions was variable. Where students with severe disabilities were included in the study, their assistants seemed to have a great deal of control and often knew their students best. In other cases, where assistants worked alongside students integrated into regular classrooms, their role was less clear. Some tended to serve only the student to whom they were assigned, a more traditional approach to resource use. However, the assistants at G. R. Davis learned how effective a little attention or affection could be with students other than their charges.

- **Integration Programming Takes at Least Four Years to Develop**

  As found in the Yellowhead study, it takes time for the concept of integration to be accepted and implemented in a school. After four years of program development at St. John's, it appeared that a school-wide program was in place, that teachers were committed to the concept and that parents were registering satisfaction with the results. However, so many changes continued to occur, both within the school and beyond its walls, that program consolidation had not yet occurred. In a junior high setting, four years appeared to be a minimum period for program development.

- **Links Can Develop Between Integration Programming, Resource Rooms and Learning Differentiation**

  In some of the case-study schools, the concept of integration was limited to students with severe disabilities. Resource room teachers often provided traditional pull-out programming which was unrelated to the regular classroom experience. Some dissatisfaction with this model was expressed, however, by both regular classroom teachers and resource room teachers because the model did not allow them to address the learning needs of all students. It appeared that schools which seriously addressed integration issues soon became aware of the shortcomings of the traditional resource room model and integration concepts began to generalize to all students. This was particularly evident at Dr. E. P. Scarlett where some regular classroom teachers began to apply learning strategies they first used with students with learning disabilities, to other students in their classes.

  Some of the case-study schools explored changes to the resource room concept. At St. John's, resource room activities were integrated into regular classrooms. At Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the support program for students with learning disabilities worked in tandem with regular classroom activities. At Grimshaw High School, resource room activities were short term and classroom related. G. R. Davis was planning to change resource room activities the following year. However, at Bishop Savaryn, where integration programming outstripped teacher support, the resource room reverted to traditional strategies.

- **Non-Integrated Programs can Successfully Support Integration**

  Two successful non-integrated programs were observed. The Grade 7 Transition Program at St. John's provided intensive remediation prior to re-integrating students into high school. The Learning Assistance Program at Dr. E. P. Scarlett acted as an adjunct program while students with learning disabilities were enrolled in regular classes. Both of these programs supported successful integration.

- **A Model for Medically Fragile Students Does Exist**

  While the Yellowhead study did not provide the opportunity to observe medically fragile students in a school setting, G. R. Davis did have such a program. Legal and safety issues related to medically fragile students were addressed at G. R. Davis. Medications were dispensed by assistants who were trained by staff at the health centre and letters were on file giving the school permission to store and administer the medications. In addition, one assistant was trained by a parent to tube feed a student several times a day. The health centre, where several of the students lived, was nearby should an emergency occur. Student acceptance was evident. After only two years, school support for integration was more positive than that in the school next door.

Some conclusions were also drawn regarding the frequency of factor occurrence, as follows:

Prevalent Critical Integration Factors	Adequate physical resources Adequate human resources Parent involvement Formal communication systems for parents re: integration Students with special needs prepared for integration
Critical Factors Frequently Present	Written policy on integration (jurisdiction level) Principal support/involvement Formal communication systems for teachers re: integration Life skills programs at high-school level (though may be informal) Regular students prepared for integration
Critical Factors Infrequently Present	Training for regular classroom teachers in integration Teacher support/involvement Written policy/mission statement (school level) Guidelines for integration (school level) Some regular teachers trained in special education Regular teachers responsible for IPPs Annual planning time for integration Weekly planning time for integration
Critical Factors Never Present	Reduced class size where students with special needs integrated.

It was concluded that all six schools were in a developmental phase in varying degrees. None yet represented a fully consolidated integration model. The school which was at the earliest stage of integration development, Grimshaw High School, already had seven factors present while the two schools furthest along the continuum of integration, Bishop Savaryn School and St. John's Junior High School, had between 15 and 17 of 19 possible factors present to some extent.

While all six schools had integration programs which were considered to be developmental in nature, all six schools also had more critical integration factors in place than the provincial norm depicted by findings in Phase 2 of this study. This supported the initial premise of case-study school selection — that these schools represented exemplary practices.

Three of the four Critical Integration Factors at the jurisdictional level were more evident in the six case-study schools' jurisdictions in Phase 3 than as reported by most provincial jurisdictions in Phase 2. Physical and human resources were judged to be adequate at all sites. Four of the six jurisdictions involved in Phase 3 had an integration policy in place since 1992. However, the last jurisdiction-based Critical Integration Factor was as poorly represented in the case-study schools as it was in schools province-wide in Phase 2. Training of regular classroom teachers on integration topics was only provided in one-third of the schools.

With regard to school-based factors, seven of the 15 school-based Critical Integration Factors were present more frequently at the school level in Phase 3 case-study schools than as reported by most provincial school jurisdictions in Phase 2, including the following.

- Parent involvement in integration activities occurred in all six case-study schools.
- Students with special needs were prepared for integration in all case-study schools.
- Principal support/involvement occurred in four of the six case-study schools.
- Formal communication systems for teachers to discuss integration were present in four of the six case-study schools.
- Regular students were prepared for the integration of students with special needs in four of the six case-study schools.
- Teacher support/involvement for integration was only observed in three of the six case-study schools, yet this was significantly better than findings in Phase 2.
- Life skills programs were present in two of the four case-study secondary schools.

Other school-based Critical Integration Factors remained poorly represented in the case-study schools although more likely to be present in the stronger integration models. These included the following.

- A written policy/mission statement at the school level.
- Guidelines for integration.
- Some regular teachers trained in special education.
- Regular classroom teachers responsible for IPP preparation.
- Weekly planning time for integration.
- Annual planning time for integration.

No case-study schools had reduced class sizes where students with special needs were integrated while a few schools indicated that this was the case in Phase 2. This difference likely reflected diminishing resources as opposed to a philosophical shift in schools.

In Phase 2 the question was raised *"If adequate human and physical resources are available in the jurisdiction to support integration, why are the school-based strategies recommended in the literature not widely in practice at the school level?"* The findings of Phase 3 begin to shed light on this issue. The school-based Critical Integration Factors are varied in the amount of impact they have on integration programming and some appear to be sequential in order. It would seem that if a school has teacher and principal support for integration, many other factors will fall into place given the third major factor — adequate time. Four years appears to be the minimum period for program development to occur. In an environment where the jurisdiction provides its critical resources, successful integration in the school appears to hinge on teacher and principal support and adequate time for program development.

It must be noted that the study occurred over a particularly volatile four-year period, as described above, and findings must be reviewed in the context of continually diminishing resources and major policy change. Even as the case studies were conducted, major changes to educational funding were announced. If one were to return to these schools next year, programming might be significantly different and some schools might even be closed. However, the researcher is convinced that the teachers and administrators described in these case studies will continue to meet the needs of these students to the best of their abilities. Adversity will only press them to be more creative than ever. The students continue to amaze us with their sensitivity and humour and we can all continue to learn from them no matter what the environment.

Recommendations

It appears that these case studies have advanced our understanding to some extent with regard to these integration themes. While it is not the intention of the researcher to advocate a boiler-plate approach to integration, it is apparent that programs work better when more of the Critical Integration Factors are in place than when they are not. The conclusion drawn in this report that these six schools have integration models which are still developmental indicates there is more work to be done provincially in terms of integration program development.

In closing, a few general recommendations are advanced for consideration:

- Training must be provided for regular classroom teachers prior to and once involved in integration activities. A strategy-based approach is likely to be most effective and teacher visitations should be strongly encouraged.

- Schools embarking on an integration course must develop their own vision of what they are trying to achieve. This vision or mission statement should then be supported by written guidelines for integration developed by the school staff.

- Joint planning time must be engineered for teachers who have joint responsibility for educaton of a student with special needs or between a regular classroom teacher and a teacher trained in integration techniques. Case-study schools have proven this can be done creatively, even without additional funding. In addition, annual planning activities which focus on integration strengthen programming significantly.

- Teachers trained in special education who are teaching in regular classrooms provide strength to a school considering an integrated program. Schools should be encouraged to use the professional expertise at their fingertips.

- A school's integration program is greatly enhanced and program ownership is more likely when regular classroom teachers take responsibility for developing IPPs. Special education or resource room teachers should provide expert advice, but the classroom teacher should have final responsibility for the IPP and its implementation.

- Reduced class size where students with special needs were integrated was not present in any of the case-study schools and is unlikely to occur in the near future. Consideration must be given to creative ways of deploying staff and of timetabling teachers' workloads to accommodate integration issues. Several useful examples are provided in the case studies of St. John's Junior High and Bishop Savaryn School.

- Further program development and research is required to explore models for addressing the needs of students with disabilities at the high-school level, particularly in senior high school. Further, work experience and life skills programs for students with disabilities at the high-school level need to be reported more broadly. Finally, the correlation of factor occurrence with program development suggests that the list of Critical Integration Factors warrants further research.

Chapter One

STUDY BACKGROUND

Chapter 1 Study Background

Changes in Integration

In 1990, the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Education, outlined an agenda for education, *Vision for the Nineties . . . A Plan of Action* based on an extensive consultation process. In particular, the topic of special education underwent extensive review.

For a number of years there had been a growing movement in Alberta towards the full integration of students with special needs into regular classrooms and neighbourhood schools. This trend was perhaps best captured by one of the objectives of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, which read as follows:

> *By the year 2000, all children will have, as their right access in their home communities, in the neighbourhood schools, to the same quality of education which is available to all other students.*

The Minister's vision reflected this trend and described integration as follows:

> ***Disabled students taking their full place . . . integrated into our schools***
>
> *Debates over integration or segregation or disabled children will be a thing of the past. Our focus will be on doing what's best for these kids . . . developing their full potential. Integration will give them the chance they need . . . to learn, to grow, to become full participants in our schools and in our society. Only for a small few will specialized programs be required to meet their complex medical and learning needs.*

In April 1992, a discussion paper on integration, *Placement of Exceptional Students — A Consultation Paper* was released which suggested that placement of exceptional students should be made on the basis of one primary objective: doing what is best for the child.

Finally, following further consultation, a policy on integration was released September 28, 1993 stating that the first option to be considered by school boards in the placement of students with exceptional needs was in regular classrooms in neighbourhood schools. The policy also recognized other placement options must be provided to meet the diverse and unique needs of students. It stressed that placement decisions by school boards must be made on the basis of the child's needs and the needs of other children in a class and made in consultation with parents, teachers and administrators. Education Minister Halvar Jonson stated:

> *Our goal is to ensure that the unique needs of all Alberta students are met and that each and every student has the opportunity to learn, grow and develop in an environment that allows them to achieve their fullest potential.*

Changes in Funding

During this period, the economic climate in Alberta was also changing with a focus on cost control and fiscal accountability. On January 18, 1994, the Minister of Education announced a major restructuring of Alberta's education system to ensure adequate funding for basic education and to resolve fiscal disparities among school jurisdictions. Most significant among the many changes was the assumption by the Province of full responsibility for the funding of elementary and secondary education (formerly a joint responsibility between the provincial government and school jurisdictions). Effective the 1994 tax year, the provincial government began to collect and redistribute all property taxes to fund education. Uniform mill rates would be phased in over three years.

At the same time, the Premier announced a four-year reduction target for spending in education and grants were reduced by 5.6% effective April 1, 1994, with further cuts planned to make a total reduction of 13.1% by 1996. Other efficiencies were also planned including the reduction of school jurisdictions from 141 to 60.

Of particular relevance to students with special needs were changes for Early Childhood Services (ECS) students. ECS special needs funding was not reduced for children with mild and moderate disabilities, and would be augmented for disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances, but funding for children with severe disabilities was reduced by 7.5% over two years. Transportation funding was not reduced.

Overview of the Study

When this study began in 1991, there was limited information available about integration practices in Alberta classrooms. An in-depth review was conducted of the Integrated Services at the Yellowhead School Division No. 12 where an integration policy had been in effect for five years (Alberta Education and the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 1992), but it was felt that a more province-wide perspective on current practices was required. As a result, this three-part study, *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta*, was commissioned to explore integration practices across Alberta, with an increasingly specific focus in each phase.

Phase 1 of the study, *Jurisdiction Screening Survey*, was a telephone survey of all superintendents in the province to determine an overview of integration practices. It was conducted in 1991–1992.

Phase 2, *Jurisdiction Practices*, was a mail-out survey to superintendents and their special education designates regarding the nature and extent of integration practices and was conducted in 1992.

Phase 3, *Case Studies*, obtained detailed information about integration in six schools in Alberta through on-site observation, staff, parent and student interviews and document review. It was conducted from 1993–1994.

This Final Report provides a summary of the findings of Phases 1 and 2, presents the Phase 3 case studies of current integration practices and conducts an analysis of findings for the complete study.

It must be noted that the study occurred over a particularly volatile four-year period, as described above, and findings must be reviewed in the context of continually diminishing resources and major policy change. Even as the case studies were conducted, major changes to educational funding were announced. If one were to return to these schools next year, programming might be significantly different. However, the researcher is convinced that the teachers and administrators described in these case studies will continue to meet the needs of these students to the best of their abilities. Adversity will only press them to be more creative than ever. The students continue to amaze us with their sensitivity and humour. We can all continue to learn from them no matter what the environment.

Related Literature

As background to the study, a review of the literature was conducted. Recent studies were reviewed to identify what factors affected the effectiveness of the integration process. Skakun (1988) provided three reasons for integration. The first was educational-psychological in nature. The already lagging development of a child with special needs was further depressed by the exclusionary process. Segregation was seen as a deprivation of stimulation from children without special needs as learning models and helpers. An interaction into progressively more demanding environments was seen as essential to all children (Feuerstein, Rand & Hoffman, 1982; Guralnick, 1978). Furthermore, the long history of "efficacy" research failed to indicate that children who attended special classes achieved more than children who attended regular classes (Dunn, 1968).

Skakun's second reason was legal-legislative in form: Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (April 17, 1985) guaranteed equality for all. Correia (1988:5), however, stated that even without legislation "Canadians generally no longer accept, tolerate or condone discrimination or the denial of rights."

Skakun's final reason was socio-ethical: children with disabilities had a right to live, work and play within the culture in which they lived, rather than within a sub-culture (Brown, 1986). Furthermore, the placement of students with disabilities in schools away from their own neighbourhood perpetuated segregation and isolation and created barriers to becoming fully accepted, participating members in their own community. Therefore, integration was seen as a goal of society (Brinker & Thorpe, 1984).

Generally, factors relating to the effectiveness of integration related to policy development, administration, teachers' and parents' roles.

Hardman (1987:106) suggested that effective school boards, superintendents and special education directors needed to take a strong stance regarding integration. An effective integration plan or policy was required which must be comprehensive and well-conceived with implementation systems built in. The plan should include the goals and objectives of integration; procedures for staff deployment, training, supervision and ongoing support; student, parent and community information and training; role clarification for the special education director and the regular school principal; transportation arrangements; provision of related services; development of a system for maintaining the coordination of curriculum and procedures and a specific timeline and assignment of responsibilities for implementation.

Correia (1988) indicated that special education directors should be actively involved in plan development and should be the "idea champions" of integration. If necessary, special education directors should also educate the board and superintendent on the basis for change and the anticipated educational, social and financial benefits. It was suggested that school principals and system administrators did not have either experience or formal training in managing the implementation of integration (Csapo & Baine, 1985; Dahl, 1985). Finally, special education directors should provide training and expertise on integrated service delivery as well as support to school principals, staff and parents.

Principals were also seen as "idea champions" who must communicate their support to staff and parents, solve problems in a joint fashion and remain flexible. They were seen as effective if, in cooperation with regular staff, they planned for sustained, positive interactions (structured and unstructured) between disabled and regular students. Those who made staff and parents choose sides, who assumed personal disloyalty for the support of integration, who made their opposition known, who actively resisted change or who showed passive resistance were doomed to failure (Hardman, 1987:113).

Hardman identified effective and ineffective characteristics of special education and regular teachers in relation to integration. The special education teacher was effective when he/she emphasized the capabilities and similarities of students rather than their deficits and differences, provided accurate, sensitive information about student abilities and needs, integrated him/herself as a staff member, became part of the regular school staff and shared responsibilities and, in cooperation with regular staff, planned positive interactions between students with and without disabilities. They were seen as ineffective if they emphasized how different their own students were and how different their role was, or if they assumed integration would take place automatically, showed a lack of sensitivity to the workload concerns and feelings of regular teachers, isolated themselves within the school or associated exclusively with other special educators and classroom assistants.

Regular teachers were seen as effective when they welcomed special education staff and students to the school, thought of ways to involve them in ongoing social and educational aspects of school life, adjusted curriculum to include knowledge of handicapping conditions and implications on lifestyle and were supportive of special education teachers' efforts to increase the interaction and knowledge of all stakeholders. They were seen as ineffective if they withdrew from special education staff and students and hoped no one would ask them to interact with either, made their opposition known, showed passive resistance and assumed that integration did not concern them.

Mitchell (1990) identified another important factor regarding teachers and integration, namely that the perceived separation between special education and regular classroom teachers could be significant. They could see themselves as qualitatively different and the established infrastructure could reinforce this perception and polarize them. One could view the other as able to delegate difficult work away and the other could view their counterpart in a comfortable job with low student-teacher ratios and extra resource allocation.

Licopoli (1983) found that the degree of successful integration in one New York school district was related to the development of new roles, new job descriptions and new staff responsibilities. According to Wilcox (1987:38):

> *Job descriptions are important, not because they make kids smarter, [but] because they can eliminate an excuse that is often used for not doing what we should be doing.*

Thousand & Villa (1989:13) related the job title and role definition of the resource teacher to their behaviour. For instance, the role is usually associated with working in a separate room, with students leaving their own classroom for special services and with only identified students benefiting from the expertise. With integration, the resource teacher is redefined as a skilled support person who provides technical assistance to any number of teachers and students in heterogeneous settings.

Freeze, Bravi & Rampaul (1989:54–58) provided a description of this form of integration in their consultative-collaborative model. It has six levels of special education service delivery as follows:

• Classroom Teacher	A professional who wishes to retain responsibility for resolving teaching-learning problems in his/her own classroom.
• Teacher Teams	Made up of close colleagues who work with similar children in similar curricular context. At the elementary level, the team could focus on grade levels or special interest areas. In high school, a team could focus on particular programs, subject areas or related disciplines.
• Resource Teacher	The resource teacher has three roles to fill: collaborator (working with other teachers on a program or activity), consultant (sharing information for decision making) and direct service provider (conducting diagnosis, prescription and remediation).
• In-school Support Services Team	These teams tend to be created on a case-by-case basis and include as many members as necessary to solve a given problem. Sometimes, the team coordinates all support services and accesses external services as needed.
• Division Support Services Team	This team coordinates services external to the school, such as from a jurisdictional consultant, clinical specialist, Department of Education consultants or community agency. These services are accessed after assessment data has been collected and in-school staff have attempted, but been unable, to solve the problem.
• Ancillary Services	These services are available in the community and include a wide range of advocacy and treatment groups.

The model results not only in professional collaboration and activity but also in the prevention of exclusionary placements of students as a routine strategy. It is an indirect service approach. Whereas in the past the child was the focus of intervention, with this model, teachers request assistance in implementing new classroom management strategies, innovative instructional programs or remedial programs targeting whole classes or groups. Resource teachers work with classroom teachers in the classroom on an ongoing basis. A by-product of this approach is its impact on non-targeted students as well as those with special needs.

McFadden (1990:6), however, reported findings from an informal survey regarding direct service provision. Students with physical disabilities were provided intensive direct contact from resource teachers and this individualized approach was well received. McFadden stated that direct service provision:

> *. . . contrasts with those services that are built solely around the consultation model. Consultation services are very necessary with scarce resources but are problematic in that they may not have a significant impact due to the intensity of service required for the particular situation. This issue will be an important one as the caseload grows . . .*

To facilitate collaboration and shared responsibility, Correia (1988) recommended that released teaching time be clearly specified. Thousand & Villa (1989:17) gave two examples of restructuring to allow for team meetings. A Vermont school district contracted a permanent substitute teacher who rotated among schools and relieved regular classroom teachers so they could participate in team meetings. Another district reserved every Friday morning for team meetings. All professional and paraprofessional staff spent Friday mornings either in team meetings or, in relieving those who did. An important consideration was that administration did not schedule school events during this collaboration.

Freeze et al. found that, although resource teachers and paraprofessional assistants were effective in the consultative-collaborative model, regular classroom teachers had concerns. If one or more children with severe handicaps were assigned them, teachers became concerned about class size and planning time. They also felt that children with special needs should not be clustered in certain classrooms. On a New Brunswick Teachers' Association province-wide survey, as reported by Correia (1988), 93% of teachers rated class size as important or very important. Based on the Swedish integration experience, Laurell (1991) suggested a classroom ratio of 1:18 or 1:20 or fewer, in order to accommodate students with special needs. She also suggested that no class have more than three high-needs students. In terms of a school population, Wilcox (1987:38) specified that a school should not have a greater number of students who have severe handicaps than the natural proportion in the community; i.e., one per cent of the student body.

Workload was a related concern. Correia (1988:31) reported that 84% of teachers with students with special needs reported an increase in their workload. Positive comments indicated that they did not begrudge the extra time; they were concerned, yet gratified. Negative comments indicated that they felt over-worked and under-assisted; that they were surviving not teaching; that they had been dumped on and that parents expected miracles.

According to Freeze et al., classroom teachers were also dissatisfied with their professional training in special education. Generally, inservice was seen as the most effective preparation for integration. Thousand & Villa (1989) identified a number of topics for inservice: collaboration skills, working with paraprofessionals and specialists, assessment techniques, early identification of students at-risk, developing Individual Program Plans (IPPs), outcomes-based instruction, cooperative learning, computer-assisted instruction, classroom management strategies, using peer tutor and buddy systems, teaching positive social skills, community service awareness and fostering excellence.

Mitchell (1990) cites parental and student involvement in integration as critical to its success. He reports that too frequently both parents and students have become inactive in school planning and decision making, not because of lack of information and presumed satisfaction of parents and students but because of the hierarchical system in the school. According to Thousand & Villa (1989:22), in successful heterogeneous schools in Vermont, parents were considered valid and valued members of the team contributing to the IPP:

> *To view the parents otherwise limits the school's access to the valuable resources which parents offer in identifying their child's strengths and needs, designing realistic and effective interventions, and evaluating the outcomes of their child's education.*

Wilcox (1987) suggested that parents have input to the IPP regarding their child's use of school time, goals to be worked on at home, issues related to the child's social network and extra-curricular activities and community advocacy required regarding jobs and residential options.

Correia (1988:9) concluded that whatever integration looked like or who it involved:

> *Integration must not be an end in itself, it must enhance the educational process, it must be meaningful and appropriate for the individual student, it must enable learning!*

The literature review identified some significant factors affecting the success of the integration of children with special needs into regular classrooms. These included the need for clear policies and plans, administrative support, teacher support, role clarification, inservice and parent and student involvement. A draft list of factors critical to integration was developed.

Findings of the recent *Integrated Services Review* in the Yellowhead School Division No. 12 (Alberta Education, 1992) were also examined for factor identification. The study was extensive in nature and included document reviews, case studies of six schools, interviews with a variety of stakeholders, a teacher survey and an assessment of students with special needs in each of the case-study schools (along with a control group) using the Child Behavior Checklist, Teacher's Report Form (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986).

In the Yellowhead study there were some themes that emerged across the six case studies which, while not necessarily generalizable, illustrated the integration process in that jurisdiction. Final study observations included the following:

- *Schools passed through similar stages of acceptance and implementation though at different periods and for different lengths of time.*
- *It took at least three years to overcome the hostility engendered by a top-down decision to integrate and some residual bitterness remained.*
- *Policy tended to precede practice. Schools with clearly thought out integration policies tended to have a clearer direction although policy did not necessarily engender acceptance.*
- *Active administrative support produced greater results. The commitment of school administrators as evidenced by scheduled team meeting time, administrator presence in some team activities, facilitated communication between the team and other staff members and a general pro-active stance moved schools ahead more quickly toward the goal of integration.*
- *The resource teacher (in this jurisdiction re-named the Classroom Support Teacher) played a pivotal role. CSTs who were good communicators and collaborators were more effective. Only once the respect and trust of regular classroom teachers was gained could the specialized skills and knowledge of the CST be employed.*
- *Schools in which regular classroom teachers accepted the responsibility for IPP preparation were more likely to have a more effective integration process.*
- *Schools in which IPP preparation included parental involvement (beyond a signature) tended to have a more effective integration process.*
- *Schools in which assistants were treated as colleagues with specialized skills and who were included in collaborative activities tended to have a more effective integration process.*
- *The issue of pull-out was not successfully resolved. In some schools it was used inappropriately and in others where it could have been effective teachers shied away from it.*
- *Elementary schools tended to adapt to integration more readily than high schools and primary grades more readily than upper elementary grades. As content became more of a focus in the classroom, new strategies were still required to address both academic and self-esteem needs.*
- *Students' behavioural and motivational problems were linked to issues beyond the school and were of growing concern to teachers yet solutions and strategies were scarce.*
- *Integration was only one of an ongoing series of new ideas to which teachers must adapt. It appeared that excellence was difficult to achieve in a continually changing context.*
- *Life skills for students with severe disabilities had not been adequately addressed, particularly at the high-school level. As school was likely to be the only preparation for life that these students would receive, issues beyond self-esteem and work experience needed to be addressed.*

The draft list of factors affecting the integration process was expanded based on the Yellowhead experience. A meeting of special education experts was held to reflect upon these findings and further revisions were made. Then the draft list was explored and revised in each of the phases of this study and a final list of Critical Integration Factors was developed. Consult Table 1.

Table 1 Critical Integration Factors

Critical Factor	
Jurisdictional Factors:	**School-based Factors:**
1. Adequate Physical Resources 2. Adequate Human Resources 3. Adequate Training Resources 4. Written Policy on Integration	5. Principal Support/Involvement 6. Teacher Support/Involvement 7. Parent Involvement 8. Written Policy/Mission Statement at School Level 9. Guidelines for Integration 10. Formal Communication Systems for Parents re: Integration 11. Formal Communication Systems for Teachers re: Integration 12. Reduced Class Size Where Students with Special Needs Integrated 13. Some Regular Teachers Trained in Special Education 14. Regular Teachers Responsible for IPPs 15. Lifeskills Program at High-school Level 16. Annual Planning Time for Integration 17. Weekly Planning Time for Integration 18. Regular Students Prepared for Integration 19. Students with Special Needs Prepared for Integration

This list of factors formed the conceptual framework for this three-part study. The next chapter summarizes the findings of Phases 1 and 2 of the study, reported elsewhere as interim reports.

Chapter Two

FINDINGS
PHASES 1 AND 2

Chapter 2 Findings Phases 1 and 2

Phase 1: Jurisdiction Screening Survey

Objectives of the Survey

The specific objectives for **Phase 1: Jurisdiction Screening Survey** were as follows:

- to obtain a broad picture of current integration practices in school jurisdictions throughout the province
- to introduce school superintendents to the study and to prepare them for possible participation in Phases 2 and 3.

Sample

Based on the Alberta School Jurisdiction List (September 27, 1991), 102 school jurisdictions were selected for the study sample out of a possible total of 205. Table 2 describes how this figure was determined to be the valid sample for the study.

Table 2 Valid Sample, Phase 1

Sample	n
Total jurisdictions in Alberta	205
Inactive/no operating schools	56
Participated in pre-test	10
Combined superintendencies*	34
Other**	3
Total valid sample	**102**

* The 34 superintendents responsible for more than one jurisdiction were only polled once
** Yellowhead and two Lloydminster jurisdictions opted out of the study

A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix 1. The survey was conducted between December 2 and December 20, 1991. The study was limited by the general nature of the survey questions and the fact that only one response was provided per superintendent.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of survey respondents by zone and jurisdiction definition; i.e., public or separate.

Table 3 Responding Superintendents by Zone and Jurisdiction Definition

Zone	Number of Jurisdictions*	Number with Duplicate Superintendent	Total Potential Respondents	Completed Surveys	Percent of Total
Zone 1 (North/West)	21	5	16	12	75.0
Zone 2 (North/East)	18	5	13	13	100.0
Zone 3 (North/Central)	36	5	31	30	96.8
Zone 4 (Central)	18	6	12	12	100.0
Zone 5 (South/Central)	18	3	15	14	93.3
Zone 6 (South)	25	10	15	15	100.0
TOTAL	**136**	**34**	**102**	**96**	**94.1**
Jurisdiction Definition					
Public	90	13	77	74	96.1
Separate	46	21	25	22	88.0
TOTAL	**136**	**34**	**102**	**96**	**94.1**

Overall, 96 superintendents were successfully contacted for the telephone survey which represented 94% of possible respondents and thus provided a high confidence level (±2.4%)[1]. All superintendents (100%) in Zones 2, 4 and 6 were sucessfully contacted. The lowest participation rate was in Zone 1 where the response rate was 75%. Separate school superintendents at 88% were somewhat less likely to participate than public school superintendents at 96%.

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[1] E. L. Vockell, 1983:111–115.

Findings

Findings for each of the survey's six general questions were:

- **Estimated change in the last two years in the way each jurisdiction approached the education of students with special needs.**

  Seventy-one per cent of superintendents indicated that there was a change in the last two years in the way their jurisdiction approached the education of students with special needs. The most change was reported by superintendents in Zone 2 and by those in public jurisdictions. The least was reported by superintendents in Zone 6 and by those in separate jurisdictions. Comments reflecting changing trends in integration indicated increased classroom support for regular teachers, an increased tendency to collaborate regarding integration, decreased use of pull-out instruction and the need to respect parent and student wishes regarding integration.

- **Identification of the proportion of schools at the elementary and secondary level where students with special needs were integrated into regular classrooms for more than 50% of their school day.**

  Nearly 90% of superintendents indicated that some elementary schools in their jurisdictions were integrating students with special needs for more than half of their school day and 75% indicated that some secondary schools did as well. When pressed for details, about three-quarters of the superintendents were able to provide greater detail about the frequency of integration practices. In all, 59 superintendents indicated that over 75% of their elementary schools integrated students with special needs for more than half the day while 45 superintendents indicated a similar percentage at the secondary level.

  The degree of integration at the elementary level appeared to be the greatest in Zone 6 and at the secondary level in Zones 2, 5 and 6, while it occurred least often in Zone 1 at both levels. Generally, separate school jurisdictions were integrating to a greater degree than public school jurisdictions at both levels.

  The definition of integration was a problem cited by superintendents at the secondary level. In a situation where all students were on individualized programs or timetables, were students with special needs integrated? If they were enrolled in Integrated Occupational Programs (IOPs) involving community or work integration, was this to be considered "integration" as defined by Alberta Education? With greater variability evident at the secondary level, it was clear that further exploration of issues such as these was required.

- **The extent of support for integration among school-based staff.**

  The majority of superintendents (54%) reported that support for integration was mixed among school-based staff. Just over one-third (38%) were able to report that staff members supported the practice. The most support was reported in Zones 2 and 4 while the least was reported in Zone 1. Public school staff members were somewhat more likely to have positive attitudes than separate school staff. The main concerns reported by superintendents related to availability of classroom support and resources, teacher concerns about added responsibility and workload, fear of change, availability of training and lack of support for students with behavioural problems. Teacher support also varied depending on the severity of the disability.

- **The status of policy development regarding integration practices.**

  One-third of superintendents reported that their jurisdiction did not have policies directly related to integration, while just under one-third indicated that integration was covered by their special education policies. The greatest number of jurisdictions to have integration policies in place were located in Zone 1 while the least were in Zone 3. Separate jurisdictions were more likely than public jurisdictions to have integration policies.

  It must be noted that when this survey was conducted, Alberta Education was in a consultation process regarding its pending integration policy. It appeared that many jurisdictions were awaiting a provincial policy on integration before developing [illegible] at their level.

- **The level of teacher involvement in the development of integration policies.**

  Most superintendents who reported that their jurisdictions had either an integration policy or a special education policy indicated that teachers were involved in the development of those policies. However, only about 21 superintendents indicated that teacher involvement was moderate or extensive. The most teacher involvement occurred in Zone 5 and the least occurred in Zone 1. Public school jurisdictions were somewhat more likely to have teachers involved in policy development than separate school jurisdictions.

- **The extent of inservice training related to integration received by teachers.**

  Forty-two per cent of superintendents reported that inservice on integration practices was provided to some but not all teachers in their jurisdictions, while just over one-third (35%) reported that all teachers had received inservice on this topic. Zone 1 superintendents reported the greatest frequency of inservice while Zone 4 reported the least. Public school jurisdictions were somewhat more likely to provide inservice on integration than separate school jurisdictions. Based on their comments it appeared that 45 superintendents offered inservice widely within their jurisdiction, 19 offered it on a needs basis, 15 reported that teachers attended inservice out-of-district and 10 offered inservice to special education staff only.

It was concluded that as a first attempt to obtain current information about integration practices in Alberta, the results of this survey were encouraging. At least three-quarters of superintendents interviewed indicated that some integration was occurring in their schools; however, more integration was evident at the elementary level than at the secondary level. It appeared that the definition of integration was more problematic at the secondary level in the context of individualized programming and scheduling. Further, it was clear that change was occurring in at least 70% of jurisdictions with regard to integration practices. Support for integration among school-based staff was mixed, integration policies were unlikely to have been developed and teacher inservice on integration was selective rather than universal.

These findings reflected the fact that the move toward integration, while under way, had not yet been formalized. It was likely that jurisdictions were waiting for provincial guidance in the area of policy development and that resources and support would follow that development. At the same time however, it was also apparent that a move towards integration at the jurisdiction level was already under way.

Phase 2: Jurisdiction Practices

Objectives of the Survey

The objectives for **Phase 2: Jurisdiction Practices** were:

- to identify which critical factors support integration in a school jurisdiction
- to determine which factors are currently present in Alberta school jurisdictions and where they are located
- to identify schools which exemplify the use of these factors.

Phase 2 involved a mail-out survey to all the superintendents identified in Phase 1 and their designates; e.g., special education director, to pursue in greater depth the extent and nature of integration practices at the jurisdiction level and to identify specific schools where exemplary strategies are being employed to provide a basis for selection of case-study schools for Phase 3.

Based on the literature review described in Chapter 1, a short checklist of 25 integration factors, *Integration Factors Checklist*, was used to poll superintendents and their designates about factor prevalence. Of the 25 integration factors, eight related to resources at the jurisdiction level and 17 were school-based strategies. A pre-test of the mail-out survey was conducted in November 1991 to assess the appropriateness of such issues as question ordering and terminology. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix 2.

Response Rates

The survey was conducted in April and May 1992 and included a telephone follow-up call to increase the return rate. Table 4 shows a breakdown of sample characteristics and final response rates.

Table 4 Responding Superintendents by Region and Jurisdiction Affiliation

Zone	Number of Jurisdictions	Number with Duplicate Superintendent	Screened Out or Declined to Participate	Total Potential Respondents	Completed Surveys	Percent of Total
Zone 1	21	5	--	16	12	75.0
Zone 2	18	4	1	13	13	100.0
Zone 3	36	5	2	29	24	82.8
Zone 4	18	5	1	12	12	100.0
Zone 5	18	3	1	14	12	85.7
Zone 6	25	8	--	17	17	100.0
Unknown	---	---	--	---	1*	---
TOTAL	**136**	**30**	**5**	**101**	**91**	**91.1**

* One survey was received with incorrect identification information so no zone location could be determined.

Overall, a total of 91 superintendents or their designates completed the survey which represented 91% of all possible respondents and thus provided a high confidence level (±1.1%)[2].

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[2] ibid.

Analysis of Data

Superintendents were initially asked to identify if certain supporting factors were available to schools on a jurisdiction-wide basis. Superintendents simply indicated either *yes*, *no*, *partially* or *don't know* for these survey items. The remaining survey items explored factors which could have varied on a school-by-school basis. For these items, superintendents were asked to identify the total number of schools at both the elementary and the secondary level where these factors were present.

In order to facilitate data comparisons among superintendents' responses, each raw score was converted to a proportion of the total schools in a jurisdiction at either the elementary or secondary level. For example, if a superintendent with 10 elementary schools reported that six of them had a principal who was actively working towards integration, the corresponding percentage would have been calculated at 60%. These individual percentages were then grouped into five general categories — 0% or none; 1–25%; 26–50%; 51–75%; and 76–100%. Figures reported in Table 5 relate only to responses in the 76–100% category. A more detailed breakdown of findings is available in the *Phase 2: Jurisdiction Practices* interim report.

In order to determine if different response patterns were obtained from different types of jurisdictions, a Chi Square test for statistical independence was conducted for jurisdictional size and zone location. For the purpose of the analysis, jurisdiction size and zone location were defined as follows:

Size: Small = Up to and including 10 schools
Medium = 11–30 schools
Large = 31 or more schools

Zone: Zone 1 (North/West)
Zone 2 (North/East)
Zone 3 (North/Central)
Zone 4 (Central)
Zone 5 (South/Central)
Zone 6 (South)

A Chi Square procedure was used to see if an unexpected number of respondents provided a particular response pattern by size or zone. Chi Square results were reported for any survey item where the probability of error was less than 5% ($p < 0.5$).

Limitations were similar to those in Phase 1 in that superintendents were only polled once, limiting the sample to a total number of superintendents rather than a total number of jurisdictions. In some cases they may have been describing more than one jurisdiction in their comments. Similarly, the general nature of the survey questions and the fact that respondents answered from a global perspective regarding their jurisdiction as opposed to regarding individual schools no doubt simplified responses. Other limitations related to memory problems or lack of information on the part of the jurisdictional representative.

Findings

The survey findings revealed that with the exception of training, resources were provided by a majority of jurisdictions to support integration. Table 5 provides a summary of the availability of jurisdiction-based resources.

Table 5 Availability of Jurisdiction-based Factors

Critical Factor	% Reported Available	Total Supts. Responding
Physical Resources:		
The materials and equipment necessary to accommodate integrated students are obtainable as needed.	57.8	90
Building renovations to accommodate students with special needs are obtainable as needed.	60.2	88
Appropriate transportation is available for students with special needs.	84.3	89
Human Resources:		
Special education consultants are available in the district for teachers to access if necessary.	56.7	90
Community resources; e.g., Health Unit/Alberta Family and Social Services, can be accessed by teachers.	67.8	90
Training Resources:		
Teacher inservices have been provided on theories related to integration.	34.4	90
Teacher inservices have been provided on practical classroom strategies related to integration.	31.1	90
Orientation sessions on integration are available to new teachers entering the system.	14.4	90

Table 6 provides a summary of findings related to the availability of school-based strategies and practices related to integration. It was apparent that they were not widespread in Alberta schools, particularly at the secondary level.

Table 6 Availability of School-based Factors

Critical Factor	Availability in Most Schools*			
	Elementary		Secondary	
	% Reporting	n	% Reporting	n
Key Players:				
Principal is actively working toward integration in the school	42.7	89	22.0	82
Teacher is actively working toward integration in the school	39.8	88	20.7	82
Parents are involved in integration planning	28.4	88	14.1	78
Use of Guidelines:				
A written policy/mission statement on integration exists at the school level	10.8	74	7.2	69
Written goals regarding integration exist at the school level	8.2	73	4.5	67
Written guidelines exist regarding pull-out instruction	12.7	79	9.5	74
Guidelines exist to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom	42.0	81	22.1	77
Formal Consultation Mechanisms:				
Formal consultation occurs between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers	41.7	84	17.8	73
Formal communication mechanisms exist between regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, parents, assistants and school administrators to discuss integration issues	46.5	86	21.5	79
Class Size:				
Class sizes are reduced for classrooms where integrated pupils have been placed	13.3	75	6.8	73
Special Education Training:				
Teachers with special education training are on staff in the school	45.2	84	19.8	81
Responsibility for IPP Preparation:				
Regular classroom teachers have the final responsibility for preparation of Individual Program Plans (IPPs)	25.0	80	7.9	76
Early Identification Programs:				
Early identification programs for detecting learning difficulties are available at the pre-school level	39.0	77	N/A	N/A

Table 6 Availability of School-based Factors

Critical Factor	Availability in Most Schools*			
	Elementary		Secondary	
	% Reporting	n	% Reporting	n
Life Skills Programs:				
Life skills programs are available for integrated students at the high-school level	N/A	N/A	11.3	80
Planning Time:				
Pre-planning time is available for teachers prior to the integration of students with special needs into the regular classroom	21.6	74	8.7	69
Weekly preparation time is available for teachers to develop lesson plans that will accommodate all students in the integrated classroom	39.0	77	18.9	74
Student Preparation:				
Teachers have prepared students in the regular classroom for the experience of having students with special needs integrated into the classroom	25.3	87	14.8	81
Teachers have prepared students with special needs for the experience of being integrated into the regular classroom	31.8	85	18.8	85

* Most schools = More than 75% of schools in the jurisdiction

Further analysis of findings revealed the following:

- Only eight of 17 identified integration factors (47%) existed in a majority of elementary schools, indicating that a great deal of work has to be done in this area. None existed in a majority of secondary schools. Therefore, either the list of critical factors is slanted towards an elementary model (which may be possible as limited literature exists about high school models) or integration at the secondary level is of questionable quality. This topic needs further study.

- Approximately 60% of superintendents indicated that active principal and teacher support for integration existed in a majority of their elementary schools. More specifically, that support occurred more frequently in small jurisdictions and in Zone 3. Only about 38% of superintendents indicated that integration was supported by a majority of secondary principals and teachers.

- Most schools did not have written policies or guidelines for integration practice. It was clear that both schools and jurisdictions were waiting for clarification at the provincial level before they developed policies of their own.

- Training about integration tended to be of a "one-shot" nature for those who did receive it and no provision was made for staff turnover. It was apparent that training in the area of integration needed to have greater support at the jurisdiction level to increase the prevalence of critical integration factors in Alberta schools.

- Zone 3 was identified as having significantly more school-based critical integration factors in place than any of the other zones.

- Large school jurisdictions were significantly more likely to have special education consultants to provide support to classroom teachers, but it was also determined that small jurisdictions had significantly more critical integration factors in place in their elementary schools. Areas such as communication, student preparation and teacher responsibility for IPP preparation were all more prevalent in small jurisdictions than in large ones. No doubt the small size of many schools in small school jurisdictions facilitated communication and demanded more responsibility from teachers in coping with all students (with no reduction in class size). However, one must ask, "What is the role of district special education consultants in large jurisdictions vis-à-vis integration as it has been defined in this study?" Other questions include, "Are the critical integration factors more appropriate in small jurisdictions than in large ones?" and "What are the barriers to integration in large school jurisdictions?"

At the conclusion of the survey, superintendents were asked to suggest the names of schools in their jurisdiction that they felt exemplified a majority of the critical integration factors outlined in this chapter.

A total of 36 superintendents (39%) nominated schools in their jurisdictions. The number of schools mentioned per superintendent ranged from one to 12. The nominated schools provided the basis for case-study site selection in Phase 3.

Survey findings left the researchers with one fundamental question. If adequate human and physical resources were available in the jurisdictions to support integration, why were the school-based strategies recommended in the literature not widely in practice at the school level? It was hoped that a more intimate view of school life in Phase 3 might reveal the answer.

Chapter Three

PHASE 3, THE CASE STUDIES

Chapter 3 Phase 3, The Case Studies

Background to the Case Studies

Study Objectives

Phase 3 of the study, *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta*, involved the selection of a cross-section of schools nominated by superintendents in Phase 2 in order to conduct on-site observation and interviews and to describe their integration practices in a case-study format.

The specific objectives for Phase 3 were as follows:

- to select a cross-section of schools which employ excellent classroom strategies to support integration
- to invite selected schools to take part in the case-study project
- to conduct site visits in order to obtain information to describe these classroom strategies
- to prepare case studies for presentation in a final report.

Case-study Methodology

The following research process was employed in Phase 3.

- Six case-study schools were selected based on division location and size, from those schools suggested by central office staff in Phase 2, for inclusion in the study.
- Selected schools were contacted and invited to participate.
- Five instruments were developed including the following:
    - *Interview Protocol: School Administration*
    - *Policy Checklist*
    - *Individualized Program Plan (IPP) Checklist*
    - *Parent Focus Group Format*
    - *Interview Protocol: School-based Staff*
- Classroom observation, document analysis; e.g., IPPs, and interviews with selected teachers, assistants, parents and the school principal were conducted. A team of two researchers visited each site including the researcher and a representative from the Special Education Branch.

- Based on data collected, draft case studies were prepared and circulated for feedback from the study site.

- This final report was prepared which included a summary of findings from Phases 1 and 2, the case studies and a cross-case analysis.

According to Yin (1989:25), case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research and can be applied in at least four situations:

- to explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies

- to describe the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred

- to describe the intervention itself

- to explore situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.

It seems particularly appropriate to explore the complex process of integration using the case-study approach.

Yin goes on to outline the five components of a case-study research design (1984:29):

- **The study questions**

  Case-study questions should focus on the *how* or *why* issues. In the following case studies, emphasis is placed on how integration was implemented.

- **The study proposition**

  The study proposition identifies potential directions for finding appropriate evidence to answer the questions or identifies underlying assumptions. In these cases the proposition is to describe integration as implemented in the specific circumstances of a school context.

- **The units of analysis**

  It is important to determine exactly what the case is about. It can be anything from an individual to an entire community. These cases focus at the school level although individuals and classes are also described as appropriate within this context.

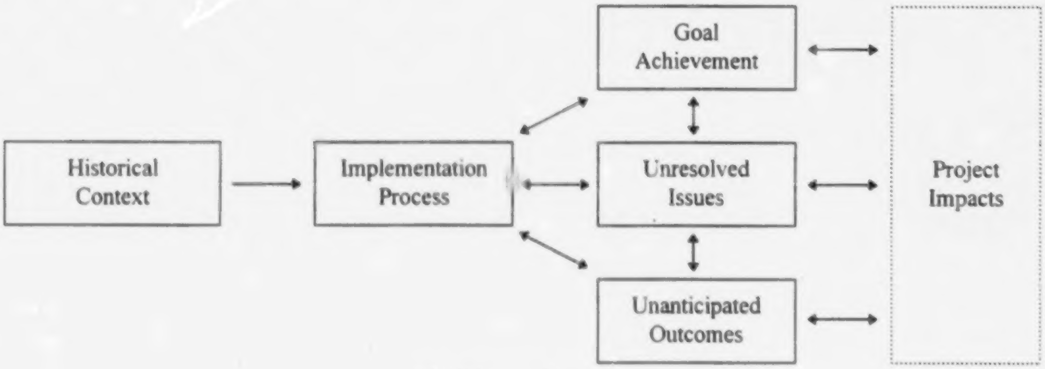
- **Linking the data to the propositions**

The steps in linking data to the propositions must be clearly delineated. In this study an evaluation model (see below) was used to guide evaluation activities. A Data Collection Matrix (also below) was developed to guide data collection and to identify the instruments used. Further, Data Keys were developed for each case study which provided the foundation for case-study preparation as described by Barrington (1992).

Evaluation Model

The evaluation model employed in the study is as follows:

Figure 1 Evaluation Design Model


Goal Achievement
Historical Context
Implementation Process
Unresolved Issues
Project Impacts
Unanticipated Outcomes

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Each of the topics outlined in the model was addressed in the instruments developed for the case-study research and was further elaborated in the Data Collection Matrix.

Data Collection Matrix

The Data Collection Matrix is provided on the following pages.

Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta

Data Collection Matrix

Research Topic	Instrument
Historical Context	
Policy Development	
Involvement in development	PI/SI
Policy scope	
Identification/assessment	PC
Placement (age appropriateness, program availability, special needs ratios, etc.)	PC
Roles/responsibilities	PC
Student/parent consultation/involvement	PC
Facilities/transportation	PC
Management of student records	PC
Conflict resolution/appeals	PC
Program/Teaching Guidelines	
Pull-out instruction	PC
Behaviour problems	PC
Referral/assessment	PC
IPP development	PC
Student evaluation	PC
Parent/guardian consultation	IC
Staff consultation time	IC
School and Community Environment	
School philosophy/values	PI/SI

PI = Principal Interview
SI = Teacher/Staff Interview
PC = Policy Checklist
IC = IPP Checklist
PF = Parent Focus Groups

Research Topic	Instrument
Implementation Process	
Preparation and Planning	
Annual pre-planning time	PI
Weekly preparation time	PI
Student preparation	
Regular classroom	SI
Special needs	SI
Other (e.g., early ID programs, reduced class sizes)	PI
Resources and Support Services	
Internal resources (classroom supports, materials/supplies, etc.)	SI
External resources (consultants, community resources, etc.)	SI
Inservice/training resources	PI, SI
Facility modifications/retrofitting	PI
Transportation services	PI
Communication Systems	
Open Communication	SI
with senior administration	PI
within school	PI, SI
with students/parents	PF
Collaborative/team decision making	PI, SI
IPP Process/Program Modification	
Involvement of critical parties (teacher, students/parents, principal, support staff)	SI, IC

PI = Principal Interview
SI = Teacher/Staff Interview
PC = Policy Checklist
IC = IPP Checklist
PF = Parent Focus Groups

Research Topic	**Instrument**
Methods and Procedures	
Placement options	SI
Program modifications	SI, IC
Evaluation and reporting	PI, SI, IC
Program Outcomes	
Direct Outcomes	
for students/families	
academic	PI, SI, PF
behavioural/social	PI, SI, PF
for teachers/staff	PI/SI
teaching practices/skills	SI
for school	PI, SI
Unanticipated Outcomes	PI, SI, PF
Unresolved Issues	PI, SI, PF, IC
Program Impacts	
Long-term Impacts on the Community	PI, SI, PF

PI = Principal Interview
SI = Teacher/Staff Interview
PC = Policy Checklist
IC = IPP Checklist
PF = Parent Focus Groups

- **Criteria for interpreting the findings**

  Yin (1989:35) commented that there is no precise way to set the criteria for interpreting case-study findings. As Merrian (1988:123) indicated, a case-study design is both qualitative and emergent. Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous process, recursive and dynamic. The final product of a case study is shaped by the data collected and the analysis that accompanies the whole process which should be both parsimonious and illuminating. The use of multiple sources of evidence allows the exploration of converging/diverging lines of inquiry.

Because the design of this project provided for multiple case studies, it produced evidence more compelling than that available in a single case. However, as Yin warned, multiple cases should be considered as multiple experiments, following a "replication" logic rather than a "sampling" logic (and are not considered representative of a larger pool). The design allowed study of the context of the phenomenon as well as the thing itself and yielded a large number of potentially relevant variables. Each case was treated as a single case, or "whole" study, and each study's conclusions were considered to be the information in need of replication in other case studies. Convergence could occur in the cross-case analysis but lack of convergence could also be instructive. It was hoped that a rich, theoretical framework would emerge from the overall study which explained under what conditions integration was likely to be successful.

Site Selection

Based on a stratified random sampling approach, schools were identified which represented rural and urban locations, Zones 1 through 6, public and separate school boards and elementary, junior high and senior high school levels. The following sample was selected for inclusion in the project:

Table 7 Schools Included in the Sample

School	Rural	Urban	Public	Separate	Zone	Level
Grimshaw High School, Peace River	✓		✓		1	HS
St. John's Junior High, Fort McMurray		✓		✓	2	JH
Our Lady of Victories, Edmonton		✓		✓	3	ELE
Crestomere School, Ponoka	✓		✓		4	ELE
Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School, Calgary		✓	✓		5	HS
G.R. Davis Middle School, Claresholm	✓		✓		6	ELE

Each of these schools was invited to participate in the study by a representative of the Special Education Branch. Five of the six agreed to participate; the sixth, Our Lady of Victories, in Edmonton, did not wish to participate as the school administrator had changed since the nomination had gone forward. The Edmonton Separate School Board nominated another school, Bishop Savaryn School, and this school agreed to participate.

A series of interview formats was developed and these are provided in Appendix 3. The schools were visited for two days each, as follows:

Grimshaw High School	November 22–23, 1993
Crestomere School	December 7–8, 1993
St. John's Junior High School	December 9–10, 1993
Bishop Savaryn School	March 3–4, 1994
G. R. Davis School	March 14–15, 1994
Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School	March 24–25, 1994.

Analysis of Data

Interview data were coded by item number, respondent group and school and were entered by computer into a Data Key for each case study. The Data Key acted as the foundation for case-study development. Additional notes based on observation at each site were compiled and relevant documents reviewed for each school. A draft case study was written for each school. These cases were circulated to staff in the appropriate schools for feedback in terms of errors, inaccuracies, omissions and incorrect inferences. All revisions were obtained from the schools at the end of June 1994. Subsequently, this final report was prepared.

The six case studies, followed by a cross-case analysis and overall conclusions and recommendations, follow.

Case Study #1 — Grimshaw High School

It was a frosty November morning when we visited Grimshaw Junior-Senior High School. Grimshaw is located about 30 minutes out of Peace River and has a population of about 2800 people.

The principal was laughing with the special education teacher over recent staff pranks.

We settled into the staff room to explore the background on integration at Grimshaw High.

Philosophy and Policy

Peace River School Division No. 10 has a special education policy which talks about "the most enabling environment." (See Appendix 1.)

The school philosophy at Grimshaw, as outlined in the school handbook, begins with the following statement:

> *To cope with and adjust to a changing world, every student needs to develop through a well-rounded education which includes the opportunity to:*
>
> *a. participate in a diverse selection of curricular courses*
> *b. participate in a diverse selection of extra-curricular activities.*
>
> *Grimshaw High School Handbook*

It goes on to talk about discipline, social responsibility, accountability, respect, safety and well-being. The principal indicated that the school's philosophy regarding integration was in a developmental state. However, they did have a statement regarding special education policy considerations:

> *As per Divisional Policy we as a school have assumed the responsibility for providing appropriate educational opportunities for all students entrusted in our care. Though it is acknowledged that, while many students share a number of common attributes, the degree of commonality varies. For exceptional students, special programs may be necessary. The objective of such programs however, should always be to return the student to the regular program at such times as it becomes feasible to do so. With this in mind "exceptional students" shall be taught in the "most enabling environment"...*
>
> *At Grimshaw High School the needs of each individual child shall be the primary factor in deciding which system is appropriate for that child. Time tabling, group size, subject area, etc. will all be additional factors which will be considered. Wherever possible we would like to try and offer this extra help within the classroom environment. If this is not possible individual students may be removed from the classroom and be provided with the extra assistance which is deemed necessary — with our ultimate goal always being to try and work the student back into the regular classroom setting.*
>
> *Grimshaw High School Special Education Statement*

According to staff interviewed at the school, there was no policy related to integration at either the school or district level. Informally they attempted to integrate students with special needs as much as possible within the resources available. They described their approach to integration as "a lot of trial and error."

The principal commented that to date the staff had seen a positive effect on regular students as well as those with special needs, but he was frustrated by their lack of expertise in dealing with the high-needs students currently enrolled in the school. He echoed the comment he often heard in the community that regular students might be receiving less of the special attention they required to achieve their potential as a result of integration.

> *A lot of our teachers see 160–170 kids a day. To put in 25% more time to prepare a special program is not fair. They tend to teach more to the middle than to either end of the scale. It's a balancing act and finances tend to influence decisions. For example, we can run an IOP class for eight learning disabled students but we have to cancel Math 31 for 13 regular students.*
>
> *Principal*
> *Grimshaw High School*

For staff members, the appropriateness of integration depended on the severity of the student's disability and the availability and training of the assistants. One teacher commented that the students who were hard of hearing or who had a physical disability, or even a behaviour disorder were probably going to benefit from integration, but for the severely disabled, it was not clear how integration could be of benefit.

Year One (1991–1992)

Two years ago, in the principal's first year, there was only one student with special needs in the school and that student was physically disabled. The washrooms were modified but otherwise the modern school already had doorways which were wheelchair accessible. A van was modified to provide transportation. He obtained special physiotherapy equipment for the special education room and some room dividers. The physio program and the support of other students at noon hour had helped the student walk on her own by the end of the year. The students felt comfortable helping her.

Year Two (1992–1993)

The next year there were three students with special needs in the school. The required physical resources were easy to obtain because the division was supportive. However, acquiring the human resources in this small community was neither easy nor particularly successful. The special education teacher was on maternity leave. The principal hired three different assistants during the year for one student with a special need.

Year Three (1993–1994)

In the current year, there are seven students with special needs in the school. The special education teacher returned from maternity leave and began to develop a new program for the new population of students with special needs. Her time is divided as follows: 0.4 FTE resource room, 0.4 special education and 0.2 in regular classes (drama, physical education and health). Fortunately, this year the principal was able to obtain assistants with the training and expertise necessary to work with students with special needs and he gives them a lot of ownership in their programs. There are five special needs assistants in the school.

Programming and Implementation

Integration

Students are integrated into regular classes to varying degrees depending on their needs, financial resources, timetabling constraints and assistant availability. As the principal commented, historically junior highs have not provided the individualized support available at the elementary level. While the students with high-needs were well resourced, other students with learning disabilities were not. All teachers receive 200 minutes of preparation time a week, regardless of the number of students with special needs who might be enrolled in their classes. The assistants also receive some preparation time.

The special education teacher makes sure that some preparation is made for integration of the students with special needs. She goes into the regular classes and provides orientation by explaining about cerebral palsy and fetal alcohol syndrome. Teachers find that students are more accepting of students with special needs this year as a result. In terms of integrating one student with a severe disability, he was introduced to his classes gradually until he was able to adapt to a regular placement (non-core subjects only). For students who had been in the community longer, it was sometimes their peers who oriented teachers to their needs; e.g., how to use the head sets for the hearing impaired students.

Programs are modified for the students with special needs by marking assignments more leniently or by changing the number or type of assignments. One parent was dissatisfied with this approach and commented:

> *It's not fair to give my child a good mark if she doesn't deserve it.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Grimshaw High School*

Students with special needs receive anecdotal reporting on a bi-monthly basis as well as daily reporting about specific gains or losses, concerns and successes. For those integrated into regular classes they receive a regular report card with an actual grade, or if the program is designated, they receive a modified mark and an anecdotal report. Some teachers are keeping student portfolios as part of their record keeping.

For students who require an IPP, the referral process is clearly laid out in division policy. For students with high needs, the special education teacher, the principal and the vice-principal meet at the beginning of the year to set up the student's program. They then call in the parents and sit down with the assistants and the committee to set up the IPP. A further meeting is held once the IPP is prepared and final decisions are made. For two students with very high needs, the group meets quarterly. The inclusion of parents in the process helps tie in the school program with what is happening at home.

Sara

Sara is a 17-year-old girl with a wonderful smile, incredible patience and a good sense of humour. She has Cerebral Palsy with spastic quadriplegia. She is in Grade 10 and has a full-time assistant. She speaks by using a Light Talker, which she operates by poking a button with her chin to generate a computer voice. She transferred from Peace River in September. The Light Talker was donated by a service club there and it was the first of its kind in northern Alberta.

However, there were problems hooking it up to a school computer to print out Sara's assignments. There was a compatibility issue between the Light Talker (programmed for an Apple) and the school computers (IBM). As we talked to Sara, her assistant was phoning Vancouver to get help with the hook-up. The special education teacher had already shipped the Light Talker into the Glenrose Hospital in Edmonton twice for repair and had also placed a number of calls to Crystal Park School for help. No one knew enough about it to fix the problem. The assistant was trying to read the hefty manuals which came with it. After four months, the Light Talker was still not functioning properly. Sara could not do her assignments or communicate fully without it.

Sara is enrolled in Reading 10, Science 14, Health 9 and CALM 9. She spends three days each week in class and two days either at water therapy or doing homework with her assistant. She is a visual learner and finds science enjoyable because of the experiments and videos. In reading class, the stories are read out loud and Sara is asked to answer comprehension questions. She uses a Bliss Board and the Light Talker to communicate with the assistant who writes down her answers. In health, an all-girls class, there is a lot of interaction which she loves. However, she finds the CALM class hard to follow as she only attends one out of three classes due to her physiotherapy schedule. She feels she misses too much in this course to be successful and she and her assistant are beginning to think that she might have to rearrange her schedule to meet the demands of senior high.

She enjoys the variety of her courses as she gets bored easily. Assignments are adapted for her in terms of length; e.g., a paragraph instead of a page, but she gets them done and submits them on time. She enjoys the intensive nature of senior high school and gets a lot out of it. Sara and her assistant told us proudly that she was averaging around 60–65% in her courses.

Sara likes the other students in her classes. It is easy to see, with her engaging smile, how they respond to her. They are fascinated by her Light Talker and it is a new experience for them to interact with a student like her.

Shawna

Looking at the shy 13-year-old, it is impossible to tell that she has been diagnosed as having fetal alcohol syndrome and attention deficit disorder with hypoactivity and a possibility of a multiple personality disorder. She was adopted in Saskatchewan by a strong and supportive family.

It took the school a year to become aware of Shawna's learning problems. She did not cope well in class and began to have trouble socially. At the end of the year, her mother suggested that she would benefit from repeating Grade 7. This served two purposes: it took her away from a socially inappropriate group and it provided her with extra assistance in the classroom as she would be able to share an assistant with another student in class. It is the mother's view that she should have a half-time assistant but in fact she has only been allotted small pieces of support time from a variety of assistants. This tends to confuse her.

Although she is integrated for language arts and math, her mother feels that she should be segregated for these subjects in order to fill in the gaps in her education:

> *They say that integration is the goal but I say that education is the goal.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Grimshaw High School*

They are currently working on Shawna's social skills and they are improving, particularly when she is not under stress. She is associating with a more appropriate peer group but still has some difficulty being accepted. Her mother feels she is "a completely different person, more mature and responsible" and she is much happier. Her teachers also comment that Shawna is gaining responsibility. She enjoys working at Apple Gully. (See page 1–9, Special Education.)

Shawna brings home her homework and is able to do it. Her teachers comment that she is able to discuss and understand terms. According to a recently administered standardized test, Shawna is working **above** her potential in language arts and is working at her potential in most other areas. It is a pleasant surprise for her parents.

> *Integration is good as long as we remember that it is a method and not a goal.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Grimshaw High School*

Krista

Krista was born with a hearing loss. Her family moved to Edmonton from Fort McMurray and she attended pre-school at the Glenrose Hospital Pre-school for the Hearing Impaired. She attended Edmonton Public Schools until the end of Grade 2 and then her family moved to Grimshaw. She is now in Grade 7. She has always had an assistant to assist her (currently at 0.75 FTE), in part due to the advocacy of her mother who continually worries that funding will be cut back. She lacks vocabulary and needs assistance with speech and works with the assistant in the resource room on language development instead of going to French and music. Otherwise, she is integrated into the regular Grade 7 class.

The school has an FM system for Krista and another student with a hearing impairment. A lot of support has been provided to the school staff by a hearing specialist from Crystal Park and by a speech pathologist from the local health unit. In addition, Crystal Park sends out a technician to train teachers on the FM system.

Krista's mother feels that she has a normal life now; something she would not have if she had gone to a specialized facility. She is a strong student and is making excellent progress. She likes school and has many friends. Her mother feels that she has always received excellent support from the community:

> *The smaller the community, the better the support. In the city, she would only have been a statistic.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Grimshaw High School*

Resource Room

The resource room has about 20 students using it. They were referred by parents or classroom teachers. Students work on tasks on a modularized basis. For example, the special education teacher teaches modules of spelling for students who are pulled out for four days, four or five times a year with consent from the students and their parents. She uses a visual spelling method and a super speller strategy for which she feels the students needed privacy, thus a pull-out approach. The Grade 8s and 9s are comfortable that they do not have to go to the resource room work "for the rest of their lives" when they come for a module but the Grade 7s are more nervous about what kind of a commitment they are making. These students have IPPs and are involved in the development of their goals.

In the second semester, the special education teacher assists in an English 13 class which has two English 16 students. She provides 80 to 120 minutes of assistance there per week and another teacher also assists for 120 minutes. There is no senior high resource program.

Brent

Brent, in Grade 7, has a congenital hearing loss. He was born with one ear too small and had skin from his arm grafted on it. His background was not particularly supportive. He hears more than Krista but appears to have a learning disability as well so he is more delayed in his learning. He is not a visual learner. When he tries to read, he says that the letters "jiggle." His hearing aids were not working and it took until the end of October to get them fixed. He works on language development in the resource room with an assistant for several hours a week.

His teacher commented that he has self-esteem problems but that he is progressing slowly. He has problems with his support system at home and this affects his motivation. He does, however, have a stable group of friends at school.

Integrated Occupational Program (IOP)

The IOP is for vocational and/or students with learning disabilities and provides them with workplace skills and core subjects. It is only available in Grades 8 and 9. At one time the IOP was part of a regular classroom but there was a lack of tolerance for these students by their peers and it worked better when they were separated. At the time of the case study, there were 10 students who were more than one year behind in the regular program and unable to function in a regular classroom. The program was decelerated but mirrored the regular program. The focus was on skills and process as opposed to content. The IOP teacher teaches most of their core subjects except social studies and some science.

The work-study component has two placements in the community a year. The IOP teacher feels that just about all potential placements in the community were accessed. Generally the merchants were supportive of the program. The IOP teacher evaluates them on peer relations, relations with adults and work skills.

At least one staff member is not sure that the IOP program is a positive concept in that the students are isolated from their peers and there is a stigma attached to enrollment. It was also observed that the IOP class usually has more boys in it than girls. At the time of our visit, there were eight boys and two girls in the class. Staff suggested that transition back into the regular program needed better management.

Karen

Karen, aged 15, is in the IOP on a full-time basis. Her attendance in her first year of high school was spotty, prior to being in IOP. Her parents pulled her out of school to provide home schooling but this never occurred.

Nicky

Nicky is a hard-working 15-year-old with Down's syndrome. His attendance is variable as most of his siblings are on home schooling. Occasionally he has difficulty making it to school if they are sleeping in, or going on a trip or if the weather is particularly nice. He is developmentally delayed and lacks the use of his left hand. He has a full-time assistant and is integrated on a part-time basis into the IOP classroom. He is developing more responsibility and modelling more acceptable behaviour.

Special Education

The students with special needs spend part of their day in the special education room which was newly equipped by the school to accommodate their needs. There is usually at least one of these students working in the room with their assistant.

The special education teacher finds that motivation can be a problem with these students and she tries to keep them interested. The newest innovation is *Apple Gully*, a mini-store run by the students which sells school supplies to students at noon hour once or twice a week. The teacher wants to develop an environment which encourages purposeful communication and money skills. The school also provide a courier service and have a microwave in the special education room to bring regular students into it.

She feels that core subject instruction to students with special needs should occur in a centralized classroom so that instruction can be more easily tailored to fit the students' needs. However, these students are encouraged to attend option courses as appropriate.

Brian

Brian is 13-years-old and sustained a brain-injury at birth due to lack of oxygen. He has autistic-like tendencies and seizures. His assistant time is split between two assistants, one at 0.75 FTE and the other at 0.25. In addition, the staff are consulting with a behaviour consultant from Crystal Park.

He is not fully integrated but is enrolled in drama, art, physical education and science because there is a lot of movement in that class. However, he can not stay in a class for the full 40 minutes. The staff are trying to help him stop such unacceptable behaviours as hair pulling, kicking and biting but it is often difficult because he is hyperactive.

A lot of Brian's program is at a functional level and occurs in the special education room. When we observed him there, his assistant showed him two pictures to chose their next activity (toilet or post office). He chose post office. He did the mail route twice a day for the school. This involved collecting the mail from around the school and taking it over to the post office.

Brian does not live at home but in a residence of his own with a case worker in full-time attendance. He sees his parents for two hours a day. His overall care plan approaches 24-hour care. Staff feel his behaviour is becoming more appropriate in classes with hands-on activities but that academic tasks are problematic.

Kurt

Kurt has a severe behaviour disorder. He is violent with his peers and exhibits severe frustration. The previous year was his first at the school and he surprised staff with his violent behaviour. The students were afraid of him. The staff wanted to have him tested because they felt he needed a behaviour modification program but it took most of the year to set this up. The test results indicate that indeed behaviour modification is in order.

In the current year, staff are better prepared to deal with him. He is repeating Grade 7 with a modified program, working on social skills, language and computers which he loves. He reports to one male teacher and stays with him most of the day. He is monitored continually and is on a contract system with rewards. His access to other students is limited. Although Kurt has improved a great deal, he still needs help in the hallways and in other unstructured situations.

Communication and Teacher Support

Communication within the school was judged to be very good by all staff members interviewed. They are able to interact a great deal and solve problems about integration as they arise. There seems to be more acceptance for students with special needs as they move up through the system. Communication with central office is considered to be good. Special testing is often conducted by the special education teacher, however when pressed for time the special education consultant from central office also conducts tests. He visits the school every other week or so but is generally on the road and has a number of other responsibilities besides special education. The division also shares a part-time psychologist with another school district but expertise is scarce.

Communication with the parents of students with special needs is also seen to be excellent. One mother told us that she was kept apprised of all upcoming events. However, she could not recall signing an IPP for her daughter. Another parent, also a teacher, was in frequent contact with the special education teacher and they exchanged materials.

Regular classroom teachers are provided with assessments, resources and strategies to work with students with special needs in their classes by the special education teacher. She also supervises the assistants and consults with them about their students' programs.

External resources include the Peace River Health Unit and the consultants at Crystal Park who are under contract to test and monitor and provide assistance. However, Grande Prairie is not that close to Grimshaw and it usually takes at least a month to have someone come out to the school unless it is an emergency. Other community resources accessed by the school from time to time include social services and mental health.

It is generally the staff's view that while inservice might be adequate for the special education staff, it is limited for the regular teachers. As this was the first year that hard of hearing students were enrolled in the school, there was an inservice for all the junior high teachers on working with students who were hard of hearing. A technician from Crystal Park had explained how the AM/FM auditory trainers worked in the classroom. These had been purchased for the school by a volunteer organization. A woman who was hard of hearing also made a presentation to staff. Teachers who had the hard of hearing students in their classes were interested and found it provided them with a lot of insight but others who did not work with the students did not find it particularly relevant.

The special education teacher also provides some inservice herself. One teacher commented that at first she had been running to her constantly for help with the system but now it worked better. Another was planning to find out about adaptive communication from the Alberta Teachers' Association Council on Computers. The assistants received an inservice on human sexuality conducted by Community Living Services as they identified this as a need.

Outcomes

Generally, it was the impression of the teachers at Grimshaw that tolerance is more evident among their students than it was prior to integration. The students were more willing to seek out the students with special needs or to help their assistants if they saw that they needed assistance. For the teachers, integration is somewhat of a shock because of the rapid increase in the number of students with special needs in the school. The concept of integration is still relatively new and staff feel that the school still has a way to go in its development. Generally, their attitude towards integration is positive, if somewhat apprehensive, as the following comments suggest:

> *They have made us better teachers!*
>
> *Don't give me a class of 40 kids plus students with special needs*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Grimshaw High School*

The lack of a resource program at the senior high level is an unresolved issue which revolves around manpower and resources. The special education teacher feels that all students at Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH) level or lower levels should have core instruction in a centralized room and be provided with a "quiet" room where they can recover from emotional outbursts.

Attachment 1

Grimshaw High School

Special Education Policy

SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

The Division has assumed the responsibility for providing appropriate educational opportunities for all students up to the age of nineteen years regardless of their academic ability. It is acknowledged that, while many students share a number of common attributes, the degree of commonality varies.

For exceptional students, special programs may be necessary. The objective of such programs, however, should always be to return the student to the regular program at such time as it becomes feasible to do so.

Exceptional students shall be taught in the "most enabling environment." This environment may be expected to change according to the needs of the child, and shall be determined by the School Division in consultation with the parents. The "most enabling environment" shall be that which most meets the educational needs of the child. Such an environment may include any or all of the following in varying degrees and time allotments:

1. *A regular classroom with a modified program*
2. *Help given by a Special Assistant*
3. *Time spent in a resource room, extended special education room, a gifted program, or community activity*
4. *Individual assistance in a segregated setting within the school*
5. *Home schooling, or a program which falls within Section 28 of The School Act.*

The School Division proceeds from the philosophy that exceptional students should receive as much individual programming as is deemed reasonable in terms of time and financial assistance, bearing in mind the constraints of public education and the need to serve all students in a responsible, effective manner.

Special Education Policy
The Peace River School Division No. 10

Case Study #2 — Crestomere School

Crestomere School is located in a small town in central Alberta not far from Ponoka. There has been a school on the property for 41 years but about three years ago, major renovations were made. So major, in fact that the staff and students had to move out for a year. They relocated to a very old schoolhouse and found that living in such close quarters had its challenges such as the fact that the library was in the hall. It was worth it, however, because they moved back into a bright, airy school with excellent facilities including wheelchair ramps and a stair-rail equipped for an elevator. It was early December when we visited the school.

Philosophy and Policy

The school's community is described as follows:

> *The Ponoka community is so aware of people with special needs. People are very caring and supportive.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Crestomere School*

An example of this support is the Serendipity Association Program, run by community volunteers and funded by service clubs fund raising and federal and provincial grants. During the winter it provides after-school swimming and bowling for children with special needs. In the summer it has a day-camp program with field trips and a maintenance program for academic skills. It is run by three part-time regular staff and a local university student during the months of May through August. From May until the end of the school year she also comes out to the school once a week to work with students.

Crestomere School houses a total of 153 students in Grades 1 to 9 with one class of each grade. There are 8.5 teachers and the principal teaches 75% of the time. Class sizes range from 11 to 22 students.

The school philosophy, as outlined in the school handbook, is:

> *The aim of education at our school is to develop abilities of individuals in order that they make a positive contribution to society. The general goals of education are the shared responsibility of the community, the school, the parents, and the student.*
>
> *Our school is a learning community and the child is the centre of our decisions. The following goals provide direction for our school:*
>
> - *to develop a desire for lifelong learning*
> - *to develop citizenship and a sense of community*
> - *to develop a positive self-concept, self-discipline, and responsibility*
> - *to develop a sense of fair play and good sportsmanship*
> - *to recognize and accept the differences of others.*
>
> *Crestomere School Handbook*
> *1993–1994*

The school does not have a special education or integration policy in any formal sense. However, they follow the policy provided by the County of Ponoka which reads in part:

> *The Board of Education of the County of Ponoka will undertake to provide appropriate special programs or services for students who have educationally significant handicapping conditions . . .*
>
> *#6. Where feasible, each handicapped student will be educated in an age-appropriate regular-class setting in the school in his or her own attendance area. However, in some instances, the Board may direct a student to attend a special program or class in a different school in the County or a school or program outside of the County.*
>
> *County of Ponoka No. 3*
> *Education Policies Manual*
> *Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children*

In the county, the special education policy is under review, subsequent to changes at the provincial level. It is the feeling of the assistant superintendent that the special education teacher's role has been evolving for the past five or six years.

In small rural schools, like Crestomere, integration is supported by the closely knit community and by the fact that the resources are simply not there for extensive pull-out or segregated programs. The special education teacher's role becomes more of a consultant and facilitator.

As Crestomere's principal commented:

> *Our philosophy is to do what is in the best interest of students but we have to work within limitations — what we want to do and what we can do are often different.*
>
> *Principal*
> *Crestomere School*

The principal taught students with special needs at Riverside School in Ponoka earlier in his career and took university courses on special education. It is his view that a school is a microcosm of our society and that children's place is to be integrated in that society. However, in some instances, total integration might not be in the best interests of the child. For example, life skills might be more appropriate than academic studies. Generally, he feels that his attitude pervades the school.

Programming and Implementation

Prior to 1991, Crestomere had a resource room and a traditional temporary pull-out model was employed. Students with severe needs were registered at Riverside. The renovations upgraded the resource room space and wheelchair ramps were added. Teachers had reservations about the addition of students with special needs because they did not feel they had adequate preparation and training. A special education teacher and an assistant were added to the staff.

In 1991, three students with special needs who lived in the community and had been attending Riverside were moved to Crestomere along with their special education teacher and their assistant. While the assistant reported that the change was difficult, in retrospect, it was definitely for the best.

The students who moved included a blind girl with behaviour problems (since moved away), a boy with Down's syndrome (now aged 13 and in Grade 4) and a boy with cerebral palsy (now aged 15 and in Grade 9) who is legally blind. The special education teacher is full time and the assistant's time varies, depending on student need. When the blind girl was in the school, she assisted her full time, but when she moved away, she started to spend half her time at Crestomere and half at another rural school.

A new special education teacher came to Crestomere in 1992. Prior to coming to the school, he ran an alternate storefront junior high school in Ponoka for 12 years and then worked at the Brain-injured Unit at Alberta Hospital in Ponoka (funded by the province). When his position was cut, he was transferred to Crestomere. His extensive knowledge of the community and working relationships with employers in town stands him in good stead in his new job. In addition, communication with the parents of students with special needs is a strength because he is active in the community and he frequently sees them in town, at the hockey rink or in the local grocery store.

The parents of the students with special needs are satisfied with the communication they receive from the school. The special education teacher prepares the IPPs in consultation with the classroom teacher and the assistant. They are signed by the parents, principal, classroom teacher, assistant and himself and are discussed with parents at the first parent-teacher interview in November. He has frequent informal contact with the parents of students with special needs as they, like other parents in the community, are often at the school and are welcome in the resource room. The report cards for students with special needs have a lot of anecdotal information in addition to the regular grades which teachers assign mainly on effort. Academic assessment of these students is a concern for them.

Integration

Darcy

Darcy has been supported by an assistant since ECS. In order to develop his independence, staff are now cutting back on his one-to-one instruction. Darcy usually spends about 15 minutes per day in science and social studies on his own and then he goes to the resource room to review this work and to do his homework. He is also in the school band and plays the bass drum. He can not read music but has an excellent sense of rhythm and learns his part. The principal leads the band and is proud of Darcy's involvement.

Darcy is a sensitive boy who is aware of his own differences. He says he does not have any friends apart from the special education teacher, Cameron and his mother. School staff have tried the Circle of Friends concept with Darcy and regular students to raise their awareness of his needs. One teacher commented that Darcy plays goalie on a school hockey team. Although you can see the other students' frustration when he lets in an easy goal, they are willing to stand with him, help him out and praise him when he does well.

Darcy's mother says that he has learned appropriate social skills since he has been integrated at Crestomere but that he still has a lot of catching up to do. As he is now a teenager, he has a great desire to be the same as his peers. As she said:

> *If you ask these kids what they want, they just want to be treated like all the other students.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Crestomere School*

Darcy wants to do the same assignments in class as other students. The special education teacher assists Darcy's teachers in modifying assignments for Darcy in such a way that he can complete them on his own, but the boy is frustrated, knowing that he is behind the class.

Cameron

Cameron is integrated into Grade 4 for most classes. His placement is at the request of his parents who discussed it with the special education teacher, the principal, the special education coordinator from central office and the classroom teacher. He is in that grade for the second year and seems happy there because he has a lot of friends there whom he has known since Grade 2 and because his brother is in Grade 5. His father says Cameron really enjoys the work experience program which had been discussed in detail with the family before it began. Cameron has not missed his friends or the school on his day in town and as his father commented:

> *Everything at Crestomere is 110%.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Crestomere School*

The special education teacher accompanies Cameron frequently to math class and often scribes for him. Cameron uses a calculator because he can not remember the basic facts, but with it he is able to get his answers correct and his exercise book is filled with successful work. When his class was observed, the students exchanged notebooks and the teacher asked students to supply the answers to the exercise. When Cameron's turn came to read his answer, he spoke indistinctly and his teacher had to assist him. The class could not understand his response and so the next student repeated the example. However, when the exercise was completed, the child who corrected Cameron's book said, "Cameron got every example right." The regular classroom teacher replied, "That's excellent. You should write that in his book!" Cameron did a "high five" with the student across the aisle.

The classroom teacher modifies Cameron's program to some extent. He makes sure he prints on the blackboard because Cameron can not read handwriting but he successfully copies work from the board. Academically, Cameron demonstrates significant growth in learning to write simple sentences and to follow classroom routines. He is a good reader and often reads at home to his parents. In health, he takes part in class discussions and role playing. The teacher says Cameron's work was surprisingly good:

> *We don't know how far these children can go. We let him go and see what he can do. We give him all the resources we have. Sometimes he surprises us.*
>
> *Classroom Teacher*
> *Crestomere School*

Cameron's mother felt he received more help when he was in a segregated class at Riverside but that he is better off at Crestomere because he has integrated well socially and has lots of good friends. Before Cameron started at Crestomere, school staff met with his parents and he toured the school. The special education teacher of the time spoke to the students in Cameron's regular class to make them aware of his needs. The teachers sometimes remind his classmates to be good role models for him and they accept him well, help him and are quick to let him know if his behaviour is inappropriate.

Cameron is in 1½ periods of language arts per day and then works individually with the special education teacher for an equivalent amount of time. His language arts teacher has not been able to establish a relationship with him to this point (December) as he refuses to make eye contact with her. For a long time in the fall he refused to come into the class at all and remained in the hall. Their only positive contact was through journal writing. Cameron's father indicates that it usually takes him six months to a year to get used to someone new. However, this was not the case at Boston Pizza. (See page 2–7, Work Experience Program.)

The special education teacher commented that they are doing much less pull-out for these students than last year as he felt they were missing basics taught in class. As the content becomes more difficult, particularly in language arts, it might become necessary to pull the students out more again. However, integration will always occur more than 50% of a student's day.

Resource Room

The special education teacher works with several other students. He provides a reading intervention program for students in Grades 1 and 2, for one period a day, for up to three months and then pulls out a different group of students.

He also tutors Larry, a Grade 5 student with a reading problem, four days a week. He attends a private reading program in Red Deer and the special education teacher attended training in this program at the request of Larry's mother. Despite the student's reading problems, he does not like being pulled out of class, especially for art as this is his favourite subject. His teachers are able to accommodate this request. His parents are pleased with the effort the school has made for him. Larry is less frustrated than he was in the past. As she commented:

> *In the past, they put down marks based on effort in case Larry saw them and then when I came in for the interview, they showed me the real marks. This year he got a C+ in Language Arts and they assured me that he had earned it.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Crestomere School*

The assistant also works with a number of children in the resource room.

Work Experience Program

The special education teacher takes the two boys, **Cameron** and Darcy, into town every Day 2 for their half-day work experience program. It includes **work experience**, consumer education and life skills. The boys go to town on the school bus with the junior high students who are off to industrial arts in a Ponoka school.

The teacher's experience with the junior high storefront school has given him access to many employers in town. He experimented with various combinations of work stations the previous year and concluded that an intensive, term-long exposure to one work station seemed to work better than sites which alternated on a weekly basis, because the students forgot their tasks between visits.

Their current work station is at the Boston Pizza Restaurant and he has others lined up for the future including the local IGA, both produce and meats and the Dairy Queen. Next year he wants to include a body shop.

He meets the bus and drives the boys to Boston Pizza which opens for staff at 9 a.m. The boys are learning how to vacuum, wash windows, set place settings, fill the dishwasher and fold pizza boxes.

When we arrived at 9:30 a.m. the boys had already cleaned the windows on the double set of front doors. They were vacuuming and we helped them move tables and chairs. The teacher was good at problem solving with them and broke tasks down into small sub-tasks. For example, he said, "What should we do with the napkins and cutlery before we move the tables?" The boys had already learned that they fall off when the tables are moved. Then he said, "What have we found out is easier when moving tables, pushing them or pulling them?" Pulling is easier because of the carpet. Then he suggested they tell us what to do with the chairs while they vacuumed under the tables. The boys took turns and one ran the vacuum while the other supervised. He asked, "What do we do when we are working?" The answer was, "We are serious." "What do we do when we are having coffee break?" The answer was, "We have fun and joke around."

The boys then took turns folding pizza boxes and vacuuming. He oversaw their work closely and a couple of times we saw him doing a little vacuuming himself when the boy with cerebral palsy got tired. Sometimes they argued over their tasks and he would ask them, "What do we have to do when we work together?" "Cooperate!" they chimed. The two hours passed quickly and pleasantly. It was nice to have the quiet, tidy restaurant to ourselves.

The waitress is responsible for everything but the cooking from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. She worked with girls with severe disabilities in Peace River and this gave her a special perspective on working with these boys. As she commented:

> *They love coming in and seeing me in the morning. I can see it in their faces. For them learning how to wash windows, fill the dishwasher and vacuum is fascinating. For us it is nothing . . . I have seen 23-year-olds who have all their faculties who are lazy and can't be bothered to do a good job. These boys really try. It is a challenge which they need and it prepares them for life.*
>
> *Waitress*
> *Boston Pizza, Ponoka*

She feels that there should be more programs like this one. It is beneficial for both the employer and the students. It helps her out by covering some of her chores while she gets caught up on other tasks. In addition, she thinks it is beneficial for the kids to get them out of a "clinical" environment to have a taste of everyday life. She thinks a lot of employers do not want to take the time to train disabled students but that they do not realize how quickly they learn or how hard they try. She has never had to go along behind the boys and redo their work. Between the two of them (with a little help from the teacher) they get the job done. "They are pros at pizza boxes!" she exclaimed. She is willing to be part of the program again any time.

At coffee break, the teacher and the boys discuss their shopping list and review banking procedures, rehearsing what they will do that day. They get cheques or cash every week from the principal along with a short grocery list. They will go to the bank to make a deposit in their accounts and then go to the grocery store to shop for items on the list which they will buy with a cheque.

When we finished at Boston Pizza and said good-bye to the staff, we drove to the bank. We said hello to Cameron's mother who works there. Cameron deposited $20 in cash and Darcy deposited a cheque for $10 and withdrew $10 in cash. The boys went up to the tellers on their own and made their transactions.

Then we went to the Co-op to buy groceries. Each boy had a list of four items; e.g., one 2-litre carton of skim milk, two 1-litre cartons of pure apple juice and one can of cream of mushroom soup. It was interesting to see how quickly Cameron found the right department but how long it took him to decide which kind of apple juice to buy. The Campbell soup cans were also a puzzler because they looked alike so it was difficult to find cream of mushroom, but he persevered until he did.

The manager of the Co-op welcomed the program and was positive about it. The store also worked with patients from Alberta Hospital.

By 12:15 we arrived at Ponoka Junior High where the boys attended previously in a segregated setting. We were greeted at the door by their former special education teacher. We had to eat lunch quickly as their foods class started at 12:45 but we managed to share a few jokes as we munched our sandwiches.

For the first half of the term, they took industrial arts. The program has 12 different components in it from woods and plastics to robotics and computers. Darcy was fully integrated and on his own until Thanksgiving and although he did not have the physical ability to use much of the equipment, he enjoyed working on the computers. The industrial arts teacher explained that in this program the students work in pairs or foursomes at various work stations. Initially, they were willing to help Darcy but as they got involved in their own projects, they were less keen to do so. He felt that he needed support if he was going to deal with students with special needs. It was pretty hectic already trying to meet the regular students' needs. At Thanksgiving, Cameron and the special education teacher joined Darcy and they worked on their own project.

Now it is the second week of foods class. There are about 25 Grade 8 students in the long, narrow room. The class is mainly about safety issues with a lecture and worksheet format along with a short video and some overheads. In the time the class completed a full worksheet, Darcy and Cameron completed about two-thirds with guided help from the special education teacher. They did not take part in class discussion.

At the end of the day they are bussed back to the school with the Crestomere students. Sometimes, however, to help out Cameron's mother, the teacher drops him off at bowling or swimming which starts in town at 3:45.

Teacher Supports

Teachers at Crestomere rely on the special education teacher to help with curriculum modification. They generally meet formally once a year to discuss programming issues and informally several times during the year. One teacher indicated that the academic goals for these students need clearer definition and that not enough guidance is provided for the regular classroom teacher. No additional planning or preparation time is provided and there is no formal team for decision making about programming for students with special needs. However, the principal and the special education teacher work closely on an informal basis and the half-time assistant is involved in parent-teacher interviews.

The school relies on a number of external resources for support in special education. The assistant superintendent for the county is often at the school. Her responsibilities include special education, Native education, health, guidance and elementary education; however, her main focus is special education. The school also uses the Consulting Services of the Edmonton Public School Board, Belvedere Children's Services in Red Deer and private psychologists to perform testing. The speech pathologist at the local health unit is an additional resource but support is provided on a first-come-first-served basis instead of on the severity of need. Resources are obtained from the Learning Disabilities Resource Centre in Calgary.

Teacher inservice is provided by the special education consultant from central office, by the ATA Specialist Councils and by the County of Ponoka. The special education teacher indicates that they try to address special education issues at professional development days in the school. In addition, special education teachers from the county meet four times a year with the special education consultant. However, the principal commented that some teachers feel uncomfortable assessing the progress of students with special needs as they do not have the specialized skills they feel they require.

Teachers commented on how the integration of students with special needs affects their own teaching practice. One indicated that he uses more cooperative learning activities in his regular teaching since Cameron was placed in his class three years ago. Another suggested that the team teaching required to work with these students is a new skill and that communication with parents is closer as a result of integration. A third is more adept at juggling different programs in the same class and at adapting materials as a result of integration.

Teachers indicated they were frustrated when students with special needs were integrated into the school in 1991 and that they are still struggling with the same questions. They feel that more resources and support are required if students with special needs are going to be integrated in order to avoid burnout. Academic assessment remains an issue. Program modification requires more guidance. More planning time is required. As one teacher commented:

> *Should I be focusing on life skills; e.g., newspaper reading, instead of the academic content? . . . I wish we could have more instruction on how to teach this [special needs] student. Am I doing the best for him? . . . You don't know if you are headed in the right direction . . . However, despite all the frustrations I have experienced with these kids, they are just so easy to love!*
>
> *Classroom Teacher*
> *Crestomere School*

Outcomes

Overall, the special education teacher was pleasantly surprised at the progress of his students with special needs. But he questioned how far integration would go and what the future of special education is going to be in the province. What supports will be provided to regular classroom teachers in the future?

As one classroom teacher commented:

> *The kids in the community have become more compassionate as a result of integration. This will help the community in the long run. If special needs kids are kept in special classes, the regular students won't have the exposure to their needs . . . It is better to teach kids skills early in life rather than provide excessive support later in life.*
>
> *Classroom Teacher*
> *Crestomere School*

Case Study #3 — St. John's Junior High School

The motto on the St. John's letterhead says it best:

> *All students can learn; all students will learn*

St. John's Junior High School, a Catholic school located in Fort McMurray, is an "inner city" school with an enrollment of about 375 students. The school is located next door to the town's major downtown mall and surrounded by commercial buildings and low-cost housing. About 30% of the school's population is Native, many of whom move into town to attend the school. It is a triple track and includes the following:

Francophone Track	ECS to Grade 8	(60 students)
English Track	Grades 7–9	(260 students)
French Immersion Track	Grades 7–9	(55 students).

The school is a "closed campus" and students are not allowed to go to the mall at noon hour. There is a strong focus on attendance and student discipline and the school's counselling program is described as vital.

Philosophy and Policy

Prior to 1990, the school had the special education/EMH junior high class for the district with a full-time teacher and an assistant. The counsellor conducted assessments and provided a life skills unit for the special education class and a pull-out gifted program that was not well received by students. In 1988, the school opened a Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) with pull-out programs on a full-time basis. At the end of the school year, the school administrative team as well as 19 of the 26 staff members left the school.

As a result, the next year the school had a new administrative team and many new staff members, including a new principal. The LAC teacher began to teach the district transition program for Grade 7 on a full-time basis. Students were in the transition class for two-thirds of their time but were integrated for physical education, health and religion. The counsellor did a life skills program with them as well. A new LAC/resource room teacher joined the staff that year and her impact on the school was significant.

Year One (1990–1991)

A team approach was used to address special education needs in the school. The vice-principal, the LAC/resource room teacher and another special education teacher, new to the school, were jointly responsible for the special education/EMH room, the LAC, assessments, IEPs and generally everything else related to students with special needs (excluding gifted education). During the year, the school adopted the concept of mastery learning. That year, with the urging of the two special education teachers, the EMH room was disbanded and students were integrated into regular classrooms. The team planned to work with these students on a pull-out basis.

The principal attended an Effective Schools Conference and was influenced by the ideas of Larry LaZotte and Madeleine Hunter. He came back to the school and announced at a staff meeting:

> *From now on, if a kid is failing, I'm not going to talk to the kid, I'm going to talk to you. All students can learn. All students will learn.*
>
> *Principal*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

The school's motto was born. The principal put it up on a banner in the courtyard. Teachers put it up in their classrooms. It was also on the school letterhead, report card, etc. He felt that if a child was not learning, then there was something the teacher was not doing right. As far as students with special needs were concerned, he thought that they had a better chance of learning if they were "normalized" completely so the concept of pull-out was phased out in favour of total integration. The team of special education teachers and the counsellor met with parents to persuade them to let their children with special needs remain in regular classrooms with specially developed programs. The team began to work with teachers on curriculum modification and also worked with teachers and students in class and the program went well. The gifted program also changed from pull-out to enrichment in the regular classroom and was the responsibility of the individual teacher. The transition program continued as before.

The principal constantly pushed the concept of student success. He had meetings with teachers after every report card to discuss students who were not succeeding. There was a lot of stress among staff members and adoption was slow. According to the principal, two of the school's best teachers were the longest hold outs and at first tried to sabotage the program. Eventually, over a period of three years, both became committed to the approach. One moved to a different school and carried the concept with him.

Year Two (1991–1992)

The special education team included the two special education teachers, the transition program teacher and a new master teacher who was not trained in special education but who had solid classroom management skills. She was hired to develop classroom strategies.

In order to provide resources for this staffing model, the school staff cut everything out of the budget for professional development (with teacher agreement) and lowered the pupil-teacher ratio. The principal advocated for this model at the board level because he felt that the short-term infusion of resources would help teachers be more comfortable meeting special needs. Once this occurred, he would reduce special education staffing. To team members, it is important that the principal is committed enough to integration to ask for additional funding. As a teacher commented:

> *How administration feels about integration makes or breaks it. You really need their support.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

The year went well and, according to the counsellor, it was a high point in program development. "Things were really humming," he said. One of the team members agreed and commented, "With four resource teachers, it was heaven!" They had monthly meetings to discuss student success and more and more students were identified with learning difficulties.

Team members went into regular classrooms to assist teachers and worked hard to provide them with direction and support but there was still some resistance to integration. Some staff members felt that some students should be pulled out. However, by the end of the year, most staff were comfortable with the integration of students with special needs. They saw that it was not that difficult to redesign regular curriculum to accommodate students with special needs once they had been shown how and most staff were able to work with the concept. At the end of the year, six staff members would leave.

A few students with special needs were involved in a work experience program which was managed by the counsellor. The most successful examples included placements at an auto repair shop and at Beaver Lumber. In fact, the student at Beaver Lumber was hired to work there on a part-time basis. As he was interested in becoming a carpenter, and enjoyed working with lumber, it was a good fit.

The transition program was maintained.

Year Three (1992–1993)

As of September 1993, the Fort McMurray Catholic School System had an inclusive education policy (see Attachment 1). In the school, resources began to decline and the special education team lost 2.0 FTE. One teacher went back to university and another returned to a regular classroom. One team member remained in charge of the LAC and was stretched to the limit. She did assessments, designed programs and worked with students in the lab. She had the equivalent of two teacher assistants available who were assigned to specific students and who also provided general classroom support. The LAC was moved into a smaller space and could only accommodate four to six students at a time. There was more pressure exerted on classroom teachers to cope with special learning needs. During this year, the IPP format and system were established.

Grade-level teams were developed. Professional development and inservice were handled internally through programs where staff taught staff and through group brainstorming. The transition program was maintained and the volunteer-run program, Project READ, was developed and implemented. The counsellor revised the gifted program to a mentorship model.

The principal also worked during this year at the district level on the concept of exit outcomes. He and another educational leader worked with many stakeholders to define what they expected students to achieve by graduation. He then brought the concept to the school and the staff worked throughout the curriculum on exit outcomes in the area of effective communication.

A boy with Down's syndrome was coming to the school and would be integrated most of the time. The counsellor went around to the Grade 7 students and explained about Down's syndrome, how the boy was the same as they were and how he was different, when they could help him and when he should be allowed to do things on his own. A special puppet show on Down's syndrome was brought to the school. The counsellor also met with the boy's parents.

Only two or three staff members left at the end of the year including the vice-principal and the LAC teacher.

Year Four (1993–1994)

Resources continue to decline. The school now has the equivalent of 1½ special education teachers. These include the transition program teacher, now only there for two hours a day, the new vice-principal (half time) and a half-time Francophone resource teacher. To compensate for the loss, one teacher's salary is divided among all staff members to provide special needs support. Teachers go into other teachers' classrooms for one or two periods per week to assist the students with special needs and to collaborate as required. The principal says that teachers are positive about this change.

There is the equivalent of two full-time assistants in the school (one full-time assistant for ESL and one half-time for L.A.C. and one half-time assigned to the boy with Down's syndrome). The school also has a 0.3 FTE Native liaison worker. The transition program is cut back to two hours a day. District cutbacks are also beginning to be felt in the school. Teacher preparation time is cut back to two periods per week.

At the time of the case study, there are 86 students with IPPs on file out of 375 students. This means that their program is modified to some extent. The principal feels that all teachers now believe that all students can learn; as he said:

> *I had my last convert this year. Now teachers won't say that a kid is lazy; instead they say that they don't know how to meet their needs. Their attitude is, "Show us how and we will do it."*
>
> *Principal*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

However, most teachers agree that this has been their toughest year. There are more students with special needs and fewer resources than ever before. It is very stressful.

As one former special education team member, now in a Grade 8 classroom full time commented:

> *I'm probably doing more special needs work now than I did as a resource teacher!*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Despite declining resources, teacher morale appears to be high. One teacher explained why:

> *The driving force behind this is the principal. Once he realized the difference we could make, he kept us going against all odds. He feeds our egos when things get tough and makes sure we get positive feedback by telling positive stories, buying us lunch and going way beyond being a principal to the teachers. He is a coach and a mentor and that makes all the difference.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Programming and Implementation

It is apparent that St. John's went through a number of programming innovations during this four-year period. As the principal commented, however:

> *Our programming was not a master plan although I knew generally where we wanted to go. It all evolved. As problems came up, solutions emerged. It was easier than I thought to find solutions.*
>
> *Principal*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Many solutions to inclusive education have emerged at St. John's. They can be grouped into integration strategies, pull-out programs and school organization and teacher support. Each of them is described in turn.

Integration

- **Program Modification**

  With all students integrated into regular classrooms it became essential to modify programming. In 1992, 20 to 25% of students at St. John's were identified as having special needs (including giftedness). In 1993, this figure continued to grow. Students were transferring to the school as its reputation as a place where students really learned grew. According to the principal, there were lots of high-risk repeaters in the school with an "I don't have anything to lose" attitude.

  In 1993, there were 86 students with IPPs. Only five had programs modified to such an extent that they were exempted from writing exams. These five students received individualized funding from the district. Their diagnosis included such descriptions as Down's syndrome, trainable mentally handicapped, educable mentally handicapped, behaviour disordered and severely language impaired. The rest of the students with special needs in the school were funded by a block grant based on the size of the school population. (The district did not receive a high incidence grant.) Most of these students had the intellectual capability to succeed in school but lacked the necessary reading or writing skills. Several gifted students also had IPPs as did those in the transition program and in ESL.

  Placement decisions were made by the grade-level teams, along with the principal and vice-principal, based on historical information, including information from outside resources such as the Glenrose Hospital or the speech pathologist. Teachers could develop an IPP for a student at any point that they determined it was necessary. Generally, they modified programs based on observation and assessment. However, assessment has taken more of a diagnostic, classroom-based focus in recent years. Before integration there was more emphasis on standardized instruments such as the WISC-R (administered by out-of-district consultants); by Year Four only one WISC-R was administered. For the five students with special funding, programming decisions were made in June. With so many students on modified programs, all teachers saw themselves as special needs teachers. As one said, "We all do special needs." No provision was made to reduce class size because of integration.

The IPPs were located on a central server and teachers had access to them through a number of terminals available around the school. The teachers were responsible for writing the goals for the IPPs, entering changes three times a year and making placement recommendations at the end of the year.

The IPP format follows:

St. John's Junior High School IPP Format

"All students can learn. All students will learn."

1993–1994

1. *Personal Data*
    - *Student Name*
    - *Funding Level*
    - *Grade Expectancy*
    - *Present Grade*
    - *Homeroom Teacher*
    - *Date of Birth, Address, etc.*
2. *History*
3. *Assessment*
4. *Program*
    - *Program Offered*
    - *Date Initiated*
    - *Person(s) Responsible*
5. *Individualized Education Plan*

    Goals and Objectives

    Strategies:
        Teaching
        Learning
6. *Recommendations for 1994–1995.*

Appended to the IPP in the server was a progress report added at the end of each term. It has the following format:

St. John's Junior High School

Progress Report

Term One

"All students can learn. All students will learn."

1. *Name*
2. *Home Room*
3. *Subject*

Knowledge
Skills
Attitudes

Students on IPPs received the progress report in addition to the regular school report card.

However, the administrators had trouble getting teachers to complete the IPPs because of the amount of time required to enter them on the server and to keep them up-to-date. It is perceived as a time management problem. But as one teacher commented:

> *It took longer worrying about the IEPs than it took to write them up!*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

With a certain amount of pressure exerted by administration, all the IPPs were up-to-date by the time of our visit in December 1993.

All parents read and signed the IPPs and were involved to some extent in decision making, particularly for those students with severe needs. Students were also involved in the development of their IPPs by including their personal goals along with the teacher's curriculum goals. Some students were independent and marked their own work and determined when they were ready to take tests.

- **Mastery Learning**

With the adoption of mastery learning as a philosophy in the school, and with programs modified to students' ability levels, the principal and the teachers began to expect success. The onus is put on the students. Those on regular programs were expected to achieve 80% in assignments and tests and those on IPPs were expected to achieve 80% mastery of their individual objectives. All students were expected to do homework, to hand in assignments and to stay in after school if necessary for extra help. As the principal explained, the teachers' attitude became, "It is not acceptable to not do this work if you want to be in this school." One teacher commented on how the students had come to realize they were in school to learn:

> *The ones at the bottom are learning to read and write. They know they have to. They can't get away with a zero. Everyone has to do it — there is no such thing as a zero! . . . They know they have to get it. In my class there are three students on modified programs and they are doing it too. They sit with a good student who will help them. No one is shy about getting help.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

A variety of strategies were used to foster mastery including cooperative learning, peer tutoring, many hands-on materials, a focus on outcomes and standards and high expectations. As one teacher explained:

> *I use cooperative learning with three groups, one at each ability level. This is the easiest way to teach and I use it all the time. The students still do individual work but they also do a lot of group work.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Review was scheduled into the curriculum. In the first week, a concept was reviewed three or four times. This decreased over time to a maintenance level. According to the principal, students were becoming more successful in their tests as content was reinforced in their long-term memories. The schedule changed to 65-minute blocks so that teachers could incorporate the review component. Many teachers were convinced that this change made a big difference in students' results.

If students did not complete their assignments, a set of consequences came into play for successive levels of non-completion, as follows:

Step 1	A second deadline is set *. . . if work is not completed . . .*
Step 2	The teacher calls home *. . . if work is not completed . . .*
Step 3	A referral form, called Aggressively Insuring Student Success, is sent to the principal and the principal talks to the student *. . . if work is not completed . . .*
Step 4	The principal and teacher meet with the student's parents

The principal said that in two years, only three such meetings were held.

Students had to achieve 80% mastery of everything they learned. If they did not, they had to go for extra help, work on the concepts and rewrite tests or portions of tests. If mastery could still not be achieved, then it was assumed that the program was too difficult for the student. The student was assessed and the program was modified so that mastery could be achieved.

- **Exit Outcomes**

The focus on exit outcomes, or "outcomes-based education" was a district-wide initiative which had a significant effect on programming at St. John's. The staff selected communicating effectively for the exit outcome to work for a two-year period (1993–1995). All inservices were geared to this topic. At the end of the first year, the students were to do a project on communicating. Teachers developed rubrics of competent/non-competent work to use as guidelines to evaluate student success. This process forced them to look at different levels of critical thinking. They looked at former tests and found out that most questions only addressed the knowledge level. As a result, they changed their exams and tests to reflect a broader spectrum of thinking skills.

Having defined competency, staff members were now considering how to help students achieve it, regardless of their ability.

Pull-out Programs

Historically, the district provided a range of services from segregated classes to resource rooms. With the initiation of integration, segregated classes were disbanded but pull-out classes remained in a variety of forms. At St. John's, pull-out programs included the Grade 7 transition program, Project READ and *ad hoc* remediation.

- **The Grade 7 Transition Program**

While the transition program was implemented the year before the principal came to St. John's, it was a precursor of attitudes which would emerge about student success. It was a district program started by an educational psychologist for Grades 1, 7 and 10 with the Grade 7 program located at St. John's.

Emphasis was placed on the following program areas:

> - *Sequential development of skills in communications and mathematics*
> - *Intensive development of study skills, organizational skills and work habits*
> - *Short-term and realistic topics*
> - *Skills development related to student current needs*
> - *Flexibility in meeting student needs*
> - *Linkages back into the regular school program*
>
> *Transition Programs Summary Report*
> *June 10, 1991*

Criteria for placement in the program included:

- Unlikely to be successful in the junior high school system
- Minimum age of 12 years
- Repetitive failure due to below average achievement with resulting poor social fit
- Sporadic attendance pattern
- Extensive remediation in some core subject areas required (behind by at least two grade levels)
- Unmotivated in the regular program
- Of average intelligence on the WISC-R.

The teacher did a lot of diagnosis and prescription and then conferenced with individual students to set individual goals and to tutor them in learning strategies. She set a long-term goal with them when they arrived:

> *You are not going to be here long!*
>
> *Teacher, Transition Program*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

She spent a lot of time on group dynamics, coping skills and esteem building. She would spend one day with students on grade-level materials and the next on prerequisite skills. The students complained that the work was too hard and she replied, "Get used to it!" Soon they were proud of what they were accomplishing and would tell their friends, "We work harder in this class."

The program included the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. The students spent about two-thirds of their time in the program but were integrated for physical education, health and religion. One teacher did a life skills unit with these students.

Students generally took from eight months to two years in the class and then returned to the regular program. They could exit at any time based on teacher observation and satisfactory performance in standardized and diagnostic tests.

The program was successful in bringing students from a point where they could either not read, or read very little, to a level where they could be fully integrated with little or no modification. Program results reported in June 1991 indicated that students progressed, on average, 10–15 percentile points in reading comprehension (May 1991 over September 1990), at least one grade level in spelling and had significant gains in mathematics. Increases in self-esteem also were positive. Demand doubled for the program.

In 1993, this class was reduced to less than half time (two hours a day) due to budgetary constraints. Students only spend three-quarters of their math and language arts time there with no time in either science or social studies. The teacher was assigned to a Grade 2 class in another school for the rest of her workload.

- **Project READ**

The success of the transition program had a significant effect on the philosophy of dealing with students with special needs at St. John's. In September 1992, staff identified 27 students who had difficulty with reading and writing skills severe enough to put them at risk. They wanted to apply the transition program's principles to the learning needs of these students by pulling them out of language arts and non-core classes.

A project team was developed which included the principal, a special education teacher, the district office consultant and the adult literacy coordinator from Keyano College. The result was Project READ, a volunteer literacy tutor program which was established in March 1993 as a partnership between Keyano College's Write Break Literacy Project and St. John's. The project was funded by the board for $3,700 and was designed to improve students' literacy levels.

Before students entered the program they and, where possible, their parents, were interviewed to obtain commitment for the program. Criteria for acceptance included good attendance, punctuality, motivation and good behaviour. As one parent remarked:

> *Project READ is for those kids who don't have an advocate. It's using community resources in a positive way.*
>
> *Parent*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Volunteers were recruited by word of mouth and posters. While originally it was planned for the program to be run by parent volunteers, most of the 12 volunteers were recruited from the community at large. Team members trained them over a two-month period with an initial two-night session, followed every two weeks by refresher sessions. Two general meetings were also held for tutors to discuss progress and share ideas and information. They were taught the necessary skills and background information to teach the students they were matched with. The special education teacher planned the individual programs and matched the students. Two assistants were hired to track the students and provide program consistency. Regular teachers were given an inservice on the tutor-training sessions so they could support the volunteers.

Eighteen students signed up for the program and the groups met for one to two hours a week. Some students preferred to learn reading and writing strategies in the context of school-based materials while others preferred to work with outside materials of interest to them, such as magazines or comic books. The focus was on skill acquisition, not content.

The school administration was afraid that students in the program would be labelled but this didn't occur. Generally, they did not feel embarrassed about being tutored, although one student changed his name for the newspaper article which profiled the program.

It was concluded at the end of the first year that the pilot was successful in demonstrating that volunteer tutors could be a valuable educational resource. More time was required to measure actual impact on students' reading skills. However, informal evaluations of the project were positive and the project continued the next year.

According to one of the volunteers, the difference she saw in her student by the end of the year convinced her to return to the program:

> *I heard a lot of "I can't" and you go from that to just zipping through the words. That was a big pull to come back.*
>
> *Volunteer*
> *Project READ*

As her student partner commented, the program helped him gain speed in his reading. Before he enrolled in the tutoring sessions, he chose television or sports instead of picking up a book; now he also enjoys reading novels.

And one teacher remarked:

> *In the past, some kids had better reading and writing skills. With Nintendo and TV there is not much reading going on. I have Grade 9s coming to me who have never read a novel. Now I have about five kids who have a public library card.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

- ***Ad Hoc* Remediation**

In 1993, due to scheduling arrangements and severe student needs, some students were being pulled out of French as a second language for two hours of intensive English remediation each week. In the second term, they were also pulled out for math.

In addition, there was such diversity in this group of Grade 9 students that they were reassigned to classes more homogeneous to better meet their needs. The special education coordinator commented that homogeneous grouping for these Grade 9s made sense. As she said:

> *There is a place for homogeneous grouping as well. We have learned a balance.*
>
> *Special Education Coordinator*
> *Fort McMurray Catholic School Division*

- **Gifted Program**

The mentoring program proved successful for about four students (out of a possible 12–15 gifted students). One student who wanted to be a journalist worked with a member of a local TV station. She hosted a children's TV show and interviewed local dignitaries, including the mayor. Another worked with an emergency physician. The rest did not like to be singled out. Two students conducted a survey of the school on the topic of a staff-student hockey game and presented their results at a staff meeting. They went on to plan the entire event including costs, transportation and equipment rental. Other students were provided with accelerated programs in the regular classroom.

School Organization and Teacher Support

- **Grade-Level Teams**

When the principal came to the school, it was a typical junior high with each teacher teaching a particular program across grades and dealing with about 125 students per day. The principal implemented a middle-school philosophy with a core classroom model where fewer teachers taught more subjects to the same students.

He established grade-level teams so that teachers could continue to work with fewer students and know them better. They felt that it was easier to teach more subjects than to spend a great part of the year getting to know their students. Some specialists remained to teach industrial arts and home economics, but even physical education was taught by the grade-level teams.

In the 1993–94 school year, there were five teams:

three English teams, one for each grade level
one French Immersion team
one Francophone team.

There was some variability in the team approach, however, depending on individual teacher preference. One master teacher had not bought into the program and still taught only language arts. Another taught all subjects except social studies. Otherwise there was general acceptance. The principal commented that teachers were learners too, who learned at their own rates, so adoption of new concepts took time. In addition, teachers who were new to the school were not trained in teaming, rather the other teachers in their team oriented them. Generally, there was a lot of bonding among teachers in the teams. A lot of team teaching occurred.

Initially, some inservice was provided on teaming but since that time the teams have worked independently. The team decided who would teach which subjects to the grade and then told the principal who put the timetable together. Dividing the staff into teams made scheduling easier.

The teams discussed instruction, assessment, evaluation and individual students. They provided support in curriculum, problem solving and resource identification. An example of a teacher-based decision at the team level was the use of mini-lessons. Teachers were not pleased with students' results in language arts in 1992–93, particularly in Grade 8, so the next year they implemented mini-grammar lessons in all subjects. A concept was provided in some depth the first time and then reviewed in a five-minute segment in every class throughout the week.

- **Special Needs Support for Teachers**

To compensate for the cutback in special education support in 1993, the principal instituted a system of peer support for teachers which was equivalent to the time of one FTE teacher. Teachers were scheduled into other teachers' classroom for one to three "special needs blocks" to act as a support. He said that because teachers worked as a team for a year already, they were comfortable in each others' classrooms. In addition, he held them accountable for student success, so like the kids, they were not afraid to ask for help. Overall, the principal felt that he had a strong and caring staff and that despite the stress levels, they were coping well with the demands placed on them.

As one teacher commented:

> *It has been wonderful. It was the principal's idea and he had to go to bat for us (at the board) again . . . I could not have managed without them.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

This system was used in many different ways. For example, a Grade 9 teacher went into one of the French Immersion classes for one class a week to teach the class while the regular teacher provided enrichment math for two gifted students. In another class, the supporting teacher worked with a student with a modified program while the classroom teacher taught the same content but at a higher level to the rest of the class. As one teacher explained:

> *I look forward to having that extra teacher, but it depends on who comes in. I have group work when they come in and my lesson plans are different for those classes.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

- **Joint Planning Time**

Teachers had two 65-minute blocks for prep time each week. At least one hour of common prep time per week was provided to team members so they could plan together. However, the principal did not feel that team planning always occurred during this period. One teacher commented that she and her team members met for an hour after school each week to plan.

- **Inservice**

Inservice changed over the four-year period from an external to an internal focus. Experts were provided at the beginning of the program and the school staff began to feel that their minds were on the cutting edge. Then they were able to access the expertise of the special education team which, along with the principal, drove program development. Finally, as resources began to dwindle, staff were able to rely on each other to test out new ideas and the administrative staff floated, acting as coaches where needed. But as one teacher commented:

> *I can't remember the PD but the special education teacher is behind us telling us what an IMP is and what program modification meant. Without her this year, it is OK for me. You need to take the responsibility on yourself, but I don't know if a new teacher could cope.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Outcomes

From the perspective of the district special education coordinator, St. John's was experiencing a lot of success with its approach to inclusive education. Student achievement as reflected in the honour roll, report cards and achievement data all increased. Discipline referrals decreased. She noted that teachers' approaches to mastery learning were steadily improving. The philosophy at St. John's, coupled with the leadership demonstrated by the principal, moved the school ahead.

Teachers noted that the significant decrease in staff turnover was indicative of their satisfaction with the innovations which were made. Student attendance was improving. Students with special needs were transferring to the school from other schools in the community.

As one teacher commented:

> *Word has spread about our philosophy. We will do whatever it takes to make kids succeed. We'll try anything. We're becoming a magnet for kids who are not succeeding. But some people resent what we are doing. It is about four times more work than traditional methods — way more than just a job — and we hear negative comments from other schools.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Teachers' comments on the outcomes of integration strategies included the following:

> *There is 100% difference in achievement. We had an open campus before . . . kids went out for lunch and didn't come back. Now it is a closed campus, we have mastery programs and expectations are much higher. Kids realize they are here to learn.*
>
> *Their biggest gains are social. I see kids here who would have been totally segregated in class with friends . . . (It's) much better; more tolerance.*
>
> *I don't have complaints about behaviour. I haven't sent one student to the office this year (different from the past). Their whole attitude is better. They say, "Let's get on with it." Kids say they are sorry and are ready to go back to class after I talk to them. Every student who is at our school wants to do well. If they don't get 80%, they want to know why. They ask what they can do to improve.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Everyone agreed that the teachers felt overloaded, particularly in Year Four as resources declined. However, they felt that they were experiencing success and that their students felt the same way. But some teachers were surprised at the level of responsibility they had for programming. As one commented:

> *I never expected to be fully responsible for some of the programs. There is no special education program. My problem is designing down programs. You have to know what they are capable of achieving and you don't know how far to push. There could have been ways to make the transition for teachers easier. A large part of it is discipline, the rest is one-to-one. I don't have time for it.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Others were surprised at the success of integration in the school. As one commented:

> *I was surprised to see it work. To see an idea jump from paper and conversation into reality! When I compare to before, kids failing and giving up, now these kids feel part of the school. They are accepted by their peers and are not seen as special education . . . The kids see that some kids need more help than others . . . We have come a long way. It's not perfect but it's nice to see. This is the closest I've ever seen to the textbook case of integration. No question about it. The best things are happening to our kids.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Another teacher confessed:

> *I was one of the ones who said I didn't want to integrate. I felt it isn't fair and we had too many special needs kids. My surprise . . . is that I wouldn't go back — it's a good feeling getting a kid to hand in good work when before you would have accepted a couple of sentences and thought he couldn't do it anyway. But we just didn't know how to teach them. Now I use different approaches and they work . . . I feel that I am a much better teacher for being in this school. I've taught so long and used to do my job and go home. I've really learned working with the principal and being in this school. I couldn't live with giving a student a zero now. It would be my fault.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

And the parents? We held a focus group with a number of parents who represented a cross-section of students with special needs. Overall, their comments were positive. A sample of their responses is as follows:

> *At first it was frustrating but the last two years he has been accelerating.*
>
> *His confidence is the biggest thing. Also his reading and his attention span have really improved. He's in the transition program for language arts and math. There is no labelling in this program.*
>
> *Integration is easier on the kids.*
>
> *The addendum to the report card is specific about his goals and how he has achieved them and what he will be working on next term. They know him and speak openly about him. Detailed information.*
>
> *They plan to have a program at the end of the year for parents to see the results of the gifted programs . . . The gifted program has enhanced her self-confidence. She gave a two-minute talk at a government round-table meeting. She helped develop her own IMP.*
>
> *He could never do extra-curricular activities. Now he is taking guitar and Air Cadets.*
>
> *It's a busy community (shift workers). When our kids were in Grade 7 there was a lot of apathy in Grade 9 parents. We have fought this and the kids are quite positive.*
>
> *St. John's is trying to balance the gifted, middle and slow. It seems to be working well.*
>
> *They call if the homework is not done and they call for positive strokes.*
>
> *Here people understand special needs and don't look at you funny. We come from many different places [to Fort McMurray] and we feel they understand. There is more awareness in the community generally.*
>
> *Good communication.*
>
> *Overall, students are happier. Kids want to be accepted; they are more accepted now. Being part of a regular class has helped the students' self-esteem. They don't feel labelled. Being in the neighbourhood school with siblings has helped provide support.*
>
> *The school is trying to balance resources and help for all students*
>
> *Parents*
> *St. John's Junior High School*

Attachment 1

St. John's Junior High School

Inclusive Education Policy

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Fort McMurray Catholic School System recognizes its responsibility for providing each student with an appropriate educational program.

DEFINITION

Inclusion is a philosophy whereby every student is accorded dignity and worth, is evaluated in terms of individual needs and is accepted as a unique individual in regular education and regular classes.

GUIDELINES

1. *The primary goal of all placement decisions is to serve the best interests of the child.*
2. *All placements and programs must support inclusion of all students.*
3. *Each school must have a school-based Special Education Team whose duty is to advise on school placement decisions, program planning and teacher inservicing.*
4. *Placements and programs will be reviewed and modified when required on a regular basis. Parents must be an integral part of the school placement and program decisions.*
5. *All programs must include an outline of resources to be provided. This may include:*
    - *a) Learning assistance*
    - *b) Teacher assistants*
    - *c) Parents*
    - *d) Students (peer assistance)*
    - *e) Contracted services*
    - *f) Occupational and physical therapy*
    - *g) Speech/language therapy*
    - *h) Behaviour therapy*
    - *i) Counselling*
    - *j) Guidance*
6. *Placements may include the following, and/or any combination:*
    - *a) Regular class placement with consultative services to the teacher from appropriate professionals*
    - *b) Regular class placement with special materials and/or teacher assistant support*
    - *c) Regular class placement with help from volunteer tutors*
    - *d) Regular class placement with special help from classroom support teachers*
    - *e) Various combinations of regular and special class placements*
    - *f) Community-based placement*
    - *g) Out-of-school placement*
7. *Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are required for all students identified as needing an educational program which is different from the regular curriculum.*
8. *Parents must be informed of their right to appeal placement decisions and the processes involved.*

Fort McMurray Catholic School System
September 13, 1993

Case Study # 4 — Bishop Savaryn School

In 1994, the environment in schools was uncertain due to budget cuts and pending administrative decisions. As we arrived at Bishop Savaryn School in Edmonton in early March, the principal had received word that he would be cut a 0.77 Grade 6 teacher as of April 1.

Although this case study is about Bishop Savaryn School, the story begins at St. Lucy, an elementary school in the next neighbourhood.

Philosophy and Policy

Journey of a Principal (1989–1991)

He was principal at St. Lucy for 12 years. It had a traditional resource room program. If a student did not fit into the criteria for the resource room (students of average intelligence and 1½ years behind peers) then the teacher had to keep the student in class.

In 1989, the area superintendent for Edmonton Catholic Schools announced a special needs project with the following goal:

> *To establish a program at the primary level which would provide academic and social skill intervention to a yet to be determined number of special needs and at risk students which have been identified by the Department of Student Services or school personnel.*

Its objectives included:

> 1. *To provide appropriate academic intervention within the student's community school*
> 2. *To provide social skill intervention within the community school*
> 3. *To foster a close working relationship between the school, the home, and support personnel in addressing the programming needs of exceptional students*
> 4. *To initiate an early intervention program of assistance to "at risk" Grade One students*

The plan was to establish a primary resource centre program. Students would be registered in the regular classroom program and receive intervention in the area of a modified language arts and, if necessary, math program through the resource centre. Program modification would be initiated by the classroom teacher in other subjects as required. At all times the classroom teacher would monitor and be responsible for the student's program of studies. In addition, intensive language development and reading readiness assistance would be provided to "at-risk" Grade 1 students.

St. Lucy was one of six schools accepted in the project. The staff identified 32 primary-aged students in need of assistance. The school received a 0.5 FTE teacher allocated to the special needs project in addition to the regular 0.8 resource room teacher. In addition, a sector team, made up of a reading specialist, a psychologist, a special education consultant and a gifted education consultant from the board's student services department, provided support to the school. A member of the team came to St. Lucy every week.

The principal challenged his staff to shift responsibility and ownership for special needs programming and delivery to the classroom teacher. He began to keep a diary about the project. During September, five students with special needs were identified. Information was obtained from their previous schools and case conferences were held by the classroom teachers, the sector team and the school resource group. Recommendations were developed for each of the five children in terms of how much classroom and pull-out instruction would be provided in language arts and math. Parents were contacted.

The principal quickly realized that a mechanism was required for open, honest, productive and regular dialogue and so he developed the program development team. It included the administrators, the counsellor, the resource teacher and interested teachers. It met every second week to brainstorm and strategize about handling specific needs.

That year, the principal's own professional development centred around handling students with special needs. He attended workshops on building community in the classroom, on attention deficit and on the social implications of learning disabilities and developing a philosophy of integration.

In February, the school held case conferences which included the classroom teachers, the sector team, the resource room teacher, the special needs project teacher and the principal to discuss in detail student needs, teacher needs and service required. Parents were contacted about the adjustments to students' programming which resulted from these meetings. The principal continued to monitor the success of the project.

During May, staff were asked to identify students with special needs for September. Inservice was held for the total staff of St. Lucy (and another school in the project) on recognizing students with special needs and key related issues in programming. The video *Kids Belong Together* was shown. The principal brought in six substitute teachers for a morning so that all staff with students with special needs could get together with the project teacher to discuss the successes and weaknesses of the year's pilot and to begin planning for the next year. Towards the end of the month, the school program development team planned and held a staff meeting to discuss the school's service delivery model for the following year.

At the end of the year, the principal and the special education consultant from central office summarized project outcomes. Successes included the following:

Program Strengths, St. Lucy

1. *Students with special needs remain in their neighbourhood school*
2. *They have increased self-esteem*
3. *They have benefited from increased social acceptance*
4. *They have an enriched learning and social environment and are presented with good modelling*
5. *There is increased tolerance and respect for individual differences among staff and students*
6. *There is open communication with parents which enhances their cooperation with the school and helps them develop their own skills*
7. *There is a positive environment resulting from staff growth and refocusing; increased staff flexibility and ownership; broader range of teaching skills*
8. *The program allows the opportunity to work with students at both ends of the spectrum (gifted as well as learning disabled)*

Struggles were identified as follows:

- **Lack of Time**

  Everyone experienced the lack of enough time. Better use of time was needed for differentiated programming and more time for monitoring was necessary.

- **Lack of Experience in Modifying Programs**

  Modifying programs provided many challenges: selection of students with special needs needed to be appropriate or discipline problems could arise; curriculum objectives needed to be reviewed and a different curriculum for students with special needs needed to be developed; inservice was required for all teachers to program for students with special needs; materials to modify programs were required; a wide range of activities was needed to increase the motivation and self-esteem of students with special needs; learned dependency of students with special needs needed to be reversed.

- **Need to Modify Grading and Reporting**

  There was a need to review the use of the traditional report card and to deal with promotion issues; to review standardized/achievement testing and to modify classroom tests. Teachers were uncertain how to assess the potential of students with special needs.

- **Need to Change Teacher Expectations for Themselves**

  There was a need for openness to change and more flexibility in delivery of service; to rethink teaching practice and avoid burnout.

- **Need for Better Communication Among Players**

  There was a need for better communication between individuals involved in programming; constant communication with parents of students with special needs; better direction and commitment from the district about programming and resources; better utilization of sector team; growing need for support from other agencies (speech therapy, mental health, social services, etc.) and dialogue with Alberta Education and all jurisdictions on issue of special needs required.

- **Need for New Structures and Supports**

  The use of a graded approach to grouping students accentuated differences between regular students and students with special needs. There was a need for variable class size and differentiated staffing; for more counsellor time (0.5 FTE suggested) to help all students adjust and to provide support for parents of students with special needs.

- **Need to Retain Some Old Structures**

  There was a need for continued support of some segregated programs such as behaviour management and early intervention.

- **Need to Protect the Rights of Regular Students**

  There was a need to be sensitive to the impact on regular students when time and resources focused on students with special needs and to determine how much time a classroom teacher can spend with students with special needs before the regular students suffer.

A New Beginning (1991–1992)

In 1991, the principal switched principalships with the administrator at Bishop Savaryn School, an elementary school with over 400 students enrolled.

In 1991, the school had a traditional resource room program (mostly pull-out instruction) with a 1.0 resource room teacher. She had many years' experience as a reading teacher and provided an excellent pull-out program. At that time, there were about five students who had significant needs and about 45 others with some degree of need.

The principal brought a number of ideas and lessons learned from St. Lucy including staff ownership for students with special needs in the context of respect for all students, an inclusive model, early identification of students with special needs, a team approach to problem solving and a close working relationship with consultants at central office.

Staff Ownership for Students with Special Needs and Respect for All

During his first year at Bishop Savaryn, the principal worked with the staff to develop a motto:

> *Where Children Grow with Love*
>
> *Bishop Savaryn School Motto*

Staff also developed a belief statement to lead teachers towards the concept of ownership and respect of all students. It read as follows:

> *We believe in:*
>
> - *Honouring human potential*
> - *Affirming the worth and dignity of each child*
> - *Helping children to discover their gifts*
> - *Nurturing the learning capabilities of each child*
> - *Providing opportunities for all children to experience success*
> - *Assisting children in developing skills for lifelong learning*
> - *Celebrating the best in everyone*
>
> *Bishop Savaryn School Belief Statement*

The staff came up with ways to encourage success and promote the best in each child in the following ways:

- Focusing on positive achievement and behaviours
- Creating successful opportunities
- Recognizing effort and improvement
- Individualizing expectations and evaluating accordingly
- Modelling strengths
- Allowing for children to recognize and celebrate each others' strengths
- Distributing attention equally.

To celebrate success staff thought of a variety of ways to acknowledge children on a daily basis and reward their achievements, both academic and social. Academic success was acknowledged by the *Plus Five Certificate*, awarded in March and June in Grades 4 to 6 for any student receiving a grade of at least 5% better than the previous reporting period, as well as the *Honours Certificate* for students receiving an average of 80% or greater with no grade less than 70%. Volunteerism and service were acknowledged by the *Recognition Certificate* for students who participated actively in school patrol, lunchroom supervision, library help, school choir, etc. Athletic success was acknowledged in a variety of ways, depending on the activity.

Inclusive Model

In the Spring of 1992, the principal requested "inclusive school" status for Bishop Savaryn to begin that September. Edmonton Catholic Schools developed a statement of philosophy which read as follows:

> *As a faith community, Edmonton Catholic Schools welcomes all students. Through inclusive practices inspired by the Gospel, the district seeks to meet students' needs in regular classroom settings within the neighbourhood school community, where a variety of services and courses are available. We recognize, also, that the needs of some students can be better met in centralized district programs where they can receive special assistance and still have the opportunity to be integrated with regular program students. Parents, guardians, and — where appropriate — students, have meaningful participation in the educational decisions regarding placement and program.*
>
> *Edmonton Catholic Schools*
> *Philosophy Statement for Inclusive Education*

With assistance from the special needs consultant at central office, the principal introduced the district's learning resources model to his staff. The model was designed in 1989 with the earlier project and had been revised several times based on evolving experiences. It was anticipated that it would expand to junior and senior high populations as well. Its purpose was:

> *To assist elementary schools to respond to the educational, emotional and social challenges of mild to moderate students with special needs within the context of their neighbourhood schools.*
>
> *Edmonton Catholic Schools*
> *Learning Resources Model*

It was a multi-dimensional service delivery model which focused on developing within each school a collaborative approach to planning and programming for students with exceptional needs. Additional teacher time was allocated to schools to assist with this process.

The model was based on the following assumptions:

1. *Service is based on student and staff needs, not on student handicaps. As a result, it can adapt to specific school or student situations.*
2. *It is a school-based model (not district-based).*
3. *It provides a range of services for students with special needs.*
4. *It assumes a team approach to programming and problem solving.*
5. *Its success is contingent upon the principal assuming a leadership role in both the coordination and implementation of the model.*

Edmonton Catholic Schools
Learning Resources Model

The model integrated three service components: differentiated instructional practices, resource facilitator service and collaborative teaming. (Consult Attachment 1.)

The model emphasized the changing role of the resource teacher, symbolized by a name change to resource facilitator. A variety of individuals might be involved in the instruction of students with special needs along with the classroom teacher and the resource facilitator, including assistants, parents and student volunteers. In addition, resource facilitators might work in a variety of settings from large group to small group to individual instruction.

Early Identification of Students with Special Needs

In May of the 1991–1992 school year, staff identified any student at risk in any way. They provided administration with a list of all students with special needs in their classes. This facilitated planning and classroom placement.

Working Relationship with Consultants

Because the principal was used to working with consultants from central office in a collaborative fashion in the first project, he continued to do so at Bishop Savaryn. They were frequently at the school.

Programming and Implementation

An Inclusive School (1992–1993)

In September 1992, Bishop Savaryn had 11 students on IPPs (six of whom qualified for district, or out-of-school programs) as well as 67 other students with special needs such as English as a Second Language, social-emotional needs, medical needs, attention deficit needs, learning disabilities or delays and giftedness.

The resource facilitator was a former classroom teacher at Bishop Savaryn and had been a resource room teacher earlier in her career. Her dissatisfaction with the traditional pull-out model caused her to return to a regular classroom where she experimented with a variety of learning strategies including cooperative learning, peer tutoring, mastery learning and differentiated instruction. She agreed to take on the resource facilitator position for the one year that the regular resource room teacher was away on deferred salary leave. In a June staff meeting prior to taking this position, she announced that she would try any instructional strategy *except* pull-out. To accommodate shift, she offered to teach each class while the home room teacher provided the pull-out instruction.

That year, the school had 1.8 FTE provided for special needs including the new 1.0 resource facilitator and three other part-time resource facilitators. These included part of two regular classroom teachers' loads (0.2 FTE primary and 0.2 FTE upper elementary) and 0.4 FTE of the assistant principal's load. He formerly worked in a resource room. The large number of team members helped to model alternative methods and to disseminate a level of trust around the school but at the same time it tended to fragment communication.

During the first two weeks of school, the teachers observed their students in action and began to instruct all their students as best they could. Then, each classroom teacher met with the resource facilitators to discuss their instructional needs as well as the needs of their students. The resource facilitators were to help teachers make inclusive classroom instruction more manageable and establish a climate for *a community of learners*. These meetings took place during class time and lasted as long as necessary, with the principal or a substitute teacher filling in for the classroom teacher. It allowed planning to occur and gave the message that classroom teachers would be supported in their endeavours with students with special needs.

Individual and group IPPs were developed together but they were the responsibility of the classroom teacher. (Consult Appendix 3 for a sample IPP.) The resource facilitator reported that this was an excellent experience and provided teachers with an opportunity to reflect on practice.

The full-time resource facilitator provided inservice activities every six weeks for the staff on such topics as program continuity, evaluation, problem solving, use of portfolios, developing programs of study and action plans. She worked with the assistants to help them best utilize their services. She modelled cooperative learning and problem-solving techniques, differentiated and individualized instruction. She demonstrated the use of peer assistance, paired reading and how to get the most out of a limited supply of computers in large classes. She provided direct classroom support so that the teacher could pull out individuals for remedial or challenge work. The assistant principal also modelled instructional techniques for spelling. High school students and parent volunteers provided assistance.

Teachers at the same grade level had cooperative planning time every second week for one period. The principal supported this by replacing one of the teachers during the other teacher's spare so that they could get together. In this way, he also kept his finger on the school's pulse and got to know individual students. Other creative arrangements were made for those grades having three classes; e.g., all students getting together for an instructional video led by the principal. The program development team continued to meet to solve problems collaboratively. Additional assistance was provided by the sector team and district consultants.

At some point in the year, the two large Grade 5 classes became a burden. The classes were split into three for the mornings and the full-time resource facilitator took on the instruction of the group with the most learning difficulties.

It became clear that success had to be measured along a continuum, that change took time and that not every staff member bought into the vision. In some instances, it was more effective to draw back and let the classroom teachers explore and discover techniques on their own and then allow them the opportunity to share with their colleagues. So many changes were implemented at once that it was almost overwhelming. The issue of student evaluation sparked a lot of debate and several professional development sessions were offered as a result. Consensus was not reached on the topic. Teachers still wondered about the impact of the most severe students with special needs on regular students.

The staff continued to work on a philosophy of inclusion and the school vision was elaborated on by using Pascarelli's idea in developing a vision and then looking at what one was willing to do: a) Do more of it, b) Do less of it, c) Stop doing it, and d) Begin to do it. The vision statement which developed from this discussion was:

1. *Our dream is to be leaders who provide the opportunities and the tools which empower others to confidently follow their dreams and develop to their full potential as learners and as "whole persons".*
2. *To empower people to achieve their full potential by instilling in them a respect for their world and a desire to learn.*
3. *Every child will go home and say, "I think my teacher likes me the most."*
4. *We dream of personal happiness and fulfilment of the individual so that we have a richer working environment.*

Bishop Savaryn School
Vision Statement

The staff vowed to laugh more, celebrate successes, provide more positive feedback, reflect on beliefs and goals, share and collaborate more and relax. They would give children a wider range of choices so that they could become more effective decision makers and provide more opportunities for shared learning. They would do less worrying, complaining, focusing on negatives, feeling guilty and striving for perfection.

Once again, in May, information was gathered about all students with special needs in the school along with an indication of what strategies had worked with them. This was formalized on a special needs planning sheet. (Consult Attachment 2.) The principal monitored placement and did a formal follow-up in November.

Refocusing (1993–1994)

In the principal's third year at Bishop Savaryn, the resource facilitator moved into administration at another school, having completed her year as a catalyst. The school has 1.6 FTE for special needs support including the former resource room teacher, returned from deferred salary leave (1.0 FTE) and 0.4 of the assistant principal's load. The school's former 0.15 ESL position was rolled into the resource facilitator's job description as well. In addition, the school has a new early intervention program.

At the time of our visit, the school was configured as follows:

two Kindergartens
three Grade 1 Classes
two Grade 2 Classes
two Grade 3 Classes
two Grade 4 Classes
two Grade 5 Classes
three Grade 6 Classes.

Integration strategies in operation at that time are described below.

Integration

Benjamin

Benjamin has been diagnosed as having a "pervasive developmental delay." He spent three years, from the ages two to four, in a special education program. In the past, he would not have been accepted in a neighbourhood school as he was termed "uneducable." However, he and his family live close to Bishop Savaryn. In February 1992, his parents asked the principal if Benjamin could attend kindergarten the following year. They wanted him to attend full days. He had no communication skills at that time but was "almost" toilet trained. By the following September, he was trained. He was an active youngster. Some of the teachers visited Benjamin in his special education program that spring. They also visited the cluster school Benjamin could have attended if his parents had so wished. His parents visited the program there but did not want their child to attend as they felt the role modelling in the special class was negative. The principal accepted the child and Benjamin came to school in June to meet everyone.

Benjamin was assigned a full-time assistant who was experienced in working with the developmentally delayed. He attended kindergarten all year, being transported to and from school by a specially funded bus. However, he also went home for lunch (a stipulation placed by the principal to allow the assistant a break) and Benjamin's father came to pick him up and drop him off at noon hour.

Every day the family received written communication from Benjamin's assistant and they replied. The system helped them to keep up-to-date on what was happening in Benjamin's life.

The first year he experienced ups and downs in his program and staff learned to deal with spitting, biting, undressing and fixations. In some ways they were amazed with his progress. By the middle of Grade 1, he can arrange a set of letters in alphabetical order and is able to read simple books orally. He can even read words presented backwards. As his teacher commented, "Although he fixates, he is getting something out of what we are doing in class. His memory skills are incredible."

Chris

Chris, also diagnosed with a "pervasive developmental delay" with autistic-like tendencies, attends a cluster ECS program. His brother already attends Bishop Savaryn. Chris was recommended to attend a special program for Grade 1 but his parents were also worried about negative role modelling. In May 1992, they came to the school with a member of the Gateway Association (an association for community living and advocacy) as an advocate and asked if Chris could attend Bishop Savaryn as well. They also approached central office with their request. The principal did not refuse. He asked the boy's parents what their expectations were for him and they replied, "We want him to learn how to live, how to be a part of the community and to be realistic about his achievement in accordance with his ability."

In September, Chris started Grade 1. His classmates soon learned that he had a number of fixations and that routine was extremely important to him. He had to be first in line. His sandwich had to be exactly the same every day. His only verbal skills were from TV video dialogue which he could recite. He would only acknowledge his teacher or assistant and made no contact with other staff members. He ate lunch under the teacher's desk until Christmas. He began to relate well to his teacher, who loved him dearly. His mother wrote a grateful letter to the teacher the day after Chris learned to reply to the question, "How are you?" He had startled his mother and brother by replying, "Fine, thank you." It was decided that he would stay a second year with his teacher in Grade 1.

The teacher noted that Chris is now able to interact with other children and can talk to other members of the staff. He has become a happy and comfortable child. However, his mother indicates that since he started talking, she feels that he could accomplish more. She feels that the teacher is not always strict enough with him and is disappointed that he has not shown more growth. She talks about moving him to another school.

Ian

Ian moved from rural Alberta to Edmonton in February 1993 and entered Grade 1 at Bishop Savaryn.

Ian was described as having behaviour and attention deficit disorders. He is bright but aggressive, has uncontrollable outbursts of temper, tends to self-abuse and has trouble with peer relationships. In his former community, his activities were severely curtailed at the school. He had to arrive after the other children and leave before them. He could not take part in music or physical education. He was frequently truant.

At Bishop Savaryn, Ian is assigned a 0.6 assistant. The principal convinced the area superintendent that the child is considered severely dangerous to other students in the class. His teacher describes him as a time bomb waiting to go off. He is not able to go on field trips because he can not control his outbursts. He is seeing a psychiatrist and taking medication.

His teacher and the assistant are making some significant progress with Ian but note that his behaviour worsens if his mother is in the school or if anything unusual happens at home. Ian was promoted to Grade 2.

He receives a lot of positive modelling in school and the beneficial effects are evident in the 1993–94 school year. His mother reports that only once during the year he did not want to come to school. However, the toll taken on staff in dealing with him also is significant. In March, staff are still not sure what would be the best program for Ian next year. He has shown a great deal of academic growth and is able to work independently most of the time and has improved socially. One girl in the class in particular had a calming effect on him and can talk him into making better behaviour choices. However, the principal believes that Ian's difficulties will continue until his home environment changes significantly.

Resource Room

Upon her return, the resource facilitator (who was on leave the previous year) offered a variety of instructional choices in order to build on the gains which were made in the previous year. While some teachers opted for pull-out, others preferred to do their own remedial work and others chose in-class intervention. The resource facilitator noted that teachers' attitudes towards students with special needs changed significantly over the three-year period. A greater tolerance and respect for individual differences was emerging in the school. A sense of trust and open communication was developing and teachers were willing to take risks, share ideas and expertise and observe their colleagues in action. They had more ownership for the success of individual students. They were talking and reflecting about teaching and more experimentation was occurring.

The IPP Process

Each of the resource room students has an IPP, as do the three students with severe needs described above. There are a total of 35 IPPs on file. Responsibility for IPP development appears to vary. The regular classroom teacher, the resource facilitator or the assistant principal, develop individual IPPs, depending on who has the most contact with the student. The teacher assistants also provide input.

The resource facilitator indicates that she also has three group IPPs (or GPPs) on file for students at the same level who require short-term remedial assistance.

The IPP process appears to be collaborative. Program development meetings are held to review all evaluation data and to develop or revise the IPP. It provides a description of the student, appropriate instructional goals, required accommodations and resources and in general sufficient detail to allow teachers to plan instruction. Parents' goals and expectations for their child are also included and they are asked to sign the completed form. A copy of the IPP is included in the student's report card and each teacher working with one of these students receives a copy. Private interviews are held with the parents of each of the 44 students to discuss progress. Other parents attended open house conferencing as opposed to private interviews.

Communication

Cooperative planning continues at each grade level and receiving teachers are prepared for students with special needs the spring before they arrive in their classrooms. As the staff continue to strive for ways of integrating successfully, the team approach to problem solving, originally used at St. Lucy, was revised to become the student success team (SST). It provides the infrastructure for the inclusive model. A white board is in the staff room to use for agenda building. The team meets every second Wednesday for half an hour. Teachers can write the name of any student with whom they are experiencing instructional difficulties and present their concerns at the meeting. Any staff member can attend to help brainstorm. Usually between six and eight teachers attend along with the resource group. The success of the team appears to lie in its flexible structure, its quick response to emerging instructional problems and its practical focus on classroom strategies. The shared problem-solving approach is well received. The school continues to work closely with consultants from central office. Modelling and classroom visitations are encouraged.

Overall, staff feel that they are communicating a lot more with each other about students with special needs.

Outcomes

All the teachers indicate that the three students with severe needs have made tremendous strides in the regular classroom setting but as one teacher commented, it has been stressful for everyone in the school to get to this point. In being challenged with the new concept of inclusive education, the staff have experienced growing pains which allow them to develop ownership and to reexamine their pedagogical practices. They judged the climate in the school to be more positive than it was the year before. They feel that their own views about students with special needs have changed, some radically and some only a little, but all feel more open to change and more tolerant. They are more aware of individual differences and are more willing to meet the students at their own level. The inservices provided at the school, their own professional reading and their experience at Bishop Savaryn has opened their eyes to the variety of student needs in the community. The homogenous student body of five years before is no longer the norm. And as the year draws to a close, adequacy of staff resources is becoming a significant issue.

Attachment 1

Bishop Savaryn School

The Learning Resources Model

THE LEARNING RESOURCES MODEL

A SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL
for
STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

Revised: June 1992

Department of Student Services

INTRODUCTION

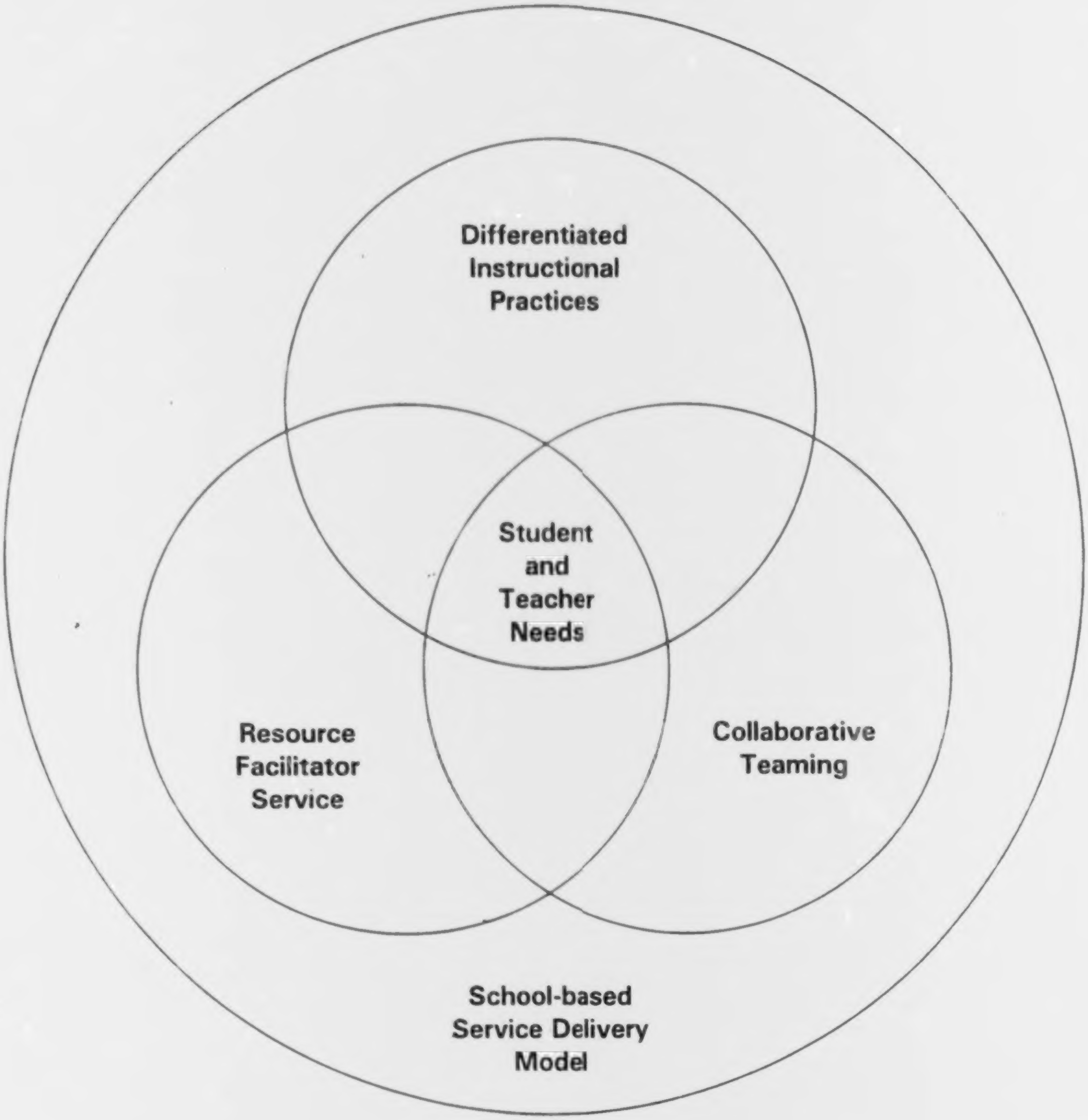
The Learning Resources Model *is intended to assist schools at the elementary level in responding to the educational, emotional and social challenges of mild to moderate students with special needs within the context of their neighbourhood schools. The model was originally designed in 1989–90, has undergone several revisions and will continue to evolve over time with consideration for expanding to junior and senior high school populations.*

The Learning Resources Model *is a multi-dimensional delivery model which focuses on developing within each school, a collaborative approach to planning and programming for students with exceptional needs. Additional teacher time is allocated to schools in order to assist with this process.*

NATURE OF THE MODEL

The Learning Resources Model *is based upon the following assumptions:*

- ***Service is based on student and staff needs*** *and not primarily on student handicaps. As such it has the flexibility of adapting to specific student/school situations.*


Differentiated Instructional Practices
Student and Teacher Needs
Resource Facilitator Service
Collaborative Teaming
School-based Service Delivery Model

COLLABORATIVE TEAMING

WHO	*WHAT*
SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM	
• *School Administrator(s)* • *Resource Facilitator(s)* • *School Counsellor (if available)* • *Classroom Teacher(s)*	• *Develop a school profile and plan for students with special needs* • *Problem solve the challenging needs of individual students* • *Coordinate resources* • *Screen referrals* • *Identify required support services* • *Generate teaching suggestions* • *Monitor service delivery plan* •
DISTRICT CONSULTANT SUPPORT	
• *Student services staff* • *Program services staff* • *Staff development* • *Religious Education*	• *Provide on-site support* • *Assist in collaborative consultation* • *Conduct assessments* • *Provide recommendations for differentiated instruction* • *Recommend referral to outside agencies* • *Recommend alternate placement in or out of district* • *Conduct inservice* • *Assist in coordinating resources*
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES SUPPORT	• *Facilitate inclusive practises from the district perspective*

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

WHO

- *Resource Facilitator(s)*
- *Classroom Teacher(s)*

WHAT

- *Lesson plan adaptation*
- *Cooperative planning*
- *Team teaching*
- *"In-class" support of teacher and student*
- *Coordinate/access alternate materials*
- *Demonstration teaching*
- *Curriculum differentiation*
- *Support initiatives such as:*
  - *Program continuity*
  - *Cooperative learning*
  - *Peer tutoring*
  - *Student/classroom management*
- *Provide one-to-one or small group instruction on an "in-class" or "pull-out" basis*
- *Assist in the generalization and transfer of skills/strategies*

Attachment 2

Bishop Savaryn School

Special Needs Planning Sheet

Dear Teachers,

With only two and a half months of school remaining in this school year, the time has come to think about next year. In order to facilitate decisions about programming for next year, please provide the following information about all the students with special needs in your present class: ***Student's Name, Special Needs,*** *and a brief description of* ***strategies that have worked for this student.*** *When considering special needs, please include emotional and behaviour concerns, as well as academically gifted or delayed students.*

Please hand in the completed information sheets to .... by April 21. Thank you for your time and help.

The following form may be used. If you require more, please copy as many as you need.

Grade: ________________
Student's Name: ________________________________
Special Needs: __________________________________

Strategies that have worked for this student:

Attachment 3

Bishop Savaryn School

Sample IPP

INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAM PLAN (19___ TO 19___)

STUDENT ____________________ *GRADE/YEAR/PROGRAM* ____________

TEACHER (IPP COORDINATOR) __________________________________

OTHER SCHOOL STAFF INVOLVED IN IPP IMPLEMENTATION ________________

____

OTHER PERSONNEL AND/OR AGENCIES INVOLVED IN IPP IMPLEMENTATION

PERSON	***AGENCY***	***SUPPORT***	***DATE(S)***

RELEVANT *STUDENT BACKGROUND (Other than on the attached profile)*

ACCOMMODATIONS AND RESOURCES *NECESSARY FOR IPP IMPLEMENTATION*

NOTE: DATE ALL ADDITIONAL ENTRIES ABOVE

GOAL (DESIRED OUTCOME)

OBJECTIVES (EXPECTATIONS AND INDICATORS)	**** START & REVIEW DATE***	***STRATEGIES/MODIFICATIONS COMMENTS***

* To coincide with scheduled reporting periods and as situations dictate.

THE FOLLOWING WILL BE ENTERED AS STUDENT PROGRESS — YEAR END

SUMMARY OF GROWTH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Include a summary of goals and progress toward these goals)

- *Recommendations to include future programming*

DATE: ____________________ *TEACHER SIGNATURE:* ______________________________

Location of IPP will be at the school in which the student is registered.

Case Study # 5 — G. R. Davis School

G. R. Davis is a Middle School with Grades 4 to 7 located in Fort MacLeod in the Willow Creek School Division. It has about 385 students registered including about 110 Native students, mainly from two reserves, the Peigan and the Blood which is the largest reserve in Canada. The physical plant was designed originally as a high school and was built on four levels with two wings and many stairs throughout. When the new high school was built, the elementary school split into two schools and upper elementary was placed in G. R. Davis. The Grade / soon joined Grades 4 to 6 there due to the large population in the new high school. Thus a middle school was created, through overcrowding, not philosophy. However, the philosophy followed according to the principal who has been at G. R. Davis since 1972.

Walking into the school on a sunny spring morning, we bumped into the special education teacher, assisting a student with special needs down the corridor. We soon joined them in the special education room and began to hear all about their students.

Philosophy and Policy

The Willow Creek School Division recently revised its special education policy to include the following statement:

> *A policy of integrating exceptional students in regular school programs will be followed and practised whenever appropriate.*
>
> *Willow Creek School Division No. 28*
> *Special Education Policy*
> *Guideline #3*

The complete special education policy is provided in Attachment 1. Although the policy was recently updated, the assistant superintendent, special education said their approach had been to place children this way for a number of years. It was their policy to never place a student in special classes unless it was reasonably certain that the student could gain more from such a placement than a conventional classroom setting. When a special placement was made, staff tried to continue integration with regular students for specified classes each day. It was the view of the division that the success of their special education programs was due to the amount of time (about 10% of their workload) special education and resource room teachers devoted to parent consultation.

There are a number of small community-based living centres for people with severe disablilities around Alberta and one of them is located in Fort MacLeod. It is called the Special Development Unit (SDU) and is attached to the Fort MacLeod Health Care Centre. It provides full-time residential care and vocational programming for individuals who are medically fragile and individuals with multiple disabilities (aged 13 through adulthood) who can not live at home. It has five units, or "homes," each with two double bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, patio, bathing facilities and a nursing station. A nurse is always on duty to administer medications.

Most of the clients in the SDU transferred from the Michener and Baker Centres when they were downsized. Included in this group were four clients under the age of 18. Three of those later moved into their adult vocational programming and three other young clients moved in from the community. The parents of these four clients retained guardianship of their children and approved all decisions made for them. From 1988 onwards, the SDU was not encouraged to admit children to the facility, as it was the policy of Social Services to address clients' needs in the community; i.e., at home or in a group home, and it was the view of the hospital board that the SDU should get out of the business of education.

The four clients were funded by global Alberta Social Services funding for their residential needs and by Handicapped Children's Services for their wheelchairs and medications. The SDU provided classroom space (funded by Alberta Health) which was staffed by a full-time teacher and one assistant (funded by the Resident Students of the Government or RSG grant from Alberta Education). These latter funds were funnelled through the Willow Creek School Division. Six school-aged clients were enrolled in the SDU class (five from the SDU and one from the community).

In the fall of 1988, the hospital board decided to close the classroom and return the young clients to their home communities to be educated there. The Willow Creek School Division was apprised that this would be happening but as time passed no sign of the transfer was evident. In June 1989, the hospital board announced that the clients would not be moved home but that the responsibility for educating them would be transferred to the school division. The division quickly determined that G. R. Davis was the most appropriate school for the location of this class as the clients were closest in age to that of the school population. The principal of G. R. Davis was told two days before the end of the school year that the SDU class was being integrated into his school in September. The SDU began to increase their programming for adult clients and the classroom space was assigned for a different purpose.

Programming and Implementation

Year One (1989–1990)

In the first year of the program, the SDU teacher came to G. R. Davis with three of the students with special needs. A fourth enrolled in September. The four students were integrated into a small Grade 5 class and it was taught by this teacher. She was so busy with her new assignment that she did not have time to build many bridges to her new staff nor was she aware of much of the discontent that was brewing. She had management duties to contend with, coordinating the four assistants in her class, along with her regular Grade 5 duties. She missed the excellent facilities of the SDU and soon found the lack of a special place for the students with disabilities was a disadvantage. Sometimes they needed to be out of class for a while for a variety of reasons. So students and their assistants spent a lot of time walking up and down the hallways or going to other quiet spaces in the school such as the library, storage area and conference room.

In fact it was a year of heated discussion in the school and a number of staff meetings were held on the issue of integration. The lack of warning about the impending change became an issue in its own right. Some teachers were worried about having a student with severe needs in their classes. Inservice and professional development activities were offered. Speakers were brought into the school to talk about integration and staff had the opportunity to enroll in summer courses at the University of Lethbridge. Despite growing community unrest over the issue, only one Grade 5 parent complained about the impact of the SDU students on his child. With all this going on, it was a year of challenge but it was, as the SDU teacher described it, a "fabulous" year. The children in the school were quick to respond to the presence of the SDU students and there was a large Circle of Friends program. They gave moving testimonials at a trustees' meeting in the spring about what the SDU students meant to them. The teacher also saw that her students were more alert and stimulated than they had been in their more protected and childless environment at the health centre.

Year Two (1990–1991)

By the fall of 1990, the controversy had not died down. The seemingly snap decision sparked a lot of discussion among staff members who felt "blind-sided" by the decision the previous year. In addition, there was political tension within the community because a trustee by-election was imminent. The main concerns in the community included the following, as summed up in an editorial in the local newspaper:

> *Can we afford to employ separate assistants for SDU students who have virtually no chance of learning and positively no chance of ever being able to support themselves when we have children who, with that kind of individual attention, could benefit immensely?*
>
> *Is it fair to pile onto teachers, already overburdened with our Native education problems, more to deal with in terms of noise and disruptions?*
>
> *Is it feasible to designate a good portion of the school division's budget to such a small number of people who could be "taught" much easier and possibly cheaper in their own facility which has already cost the taxpayers a fair chunk of money?*
>
> *Is it possible to maintain this level of "education" for the few without it being at the expense of the many?*

What about the students who are borderline, who don't quite fit into the resource room scene but may need extra help outside the regular crowded classroom but can't get it because we don't have money for that extra teacher?

What about washroom facilities at our schools? Were they set up for changing diapers or is that creating a sanitary problem for the rest of the students?

. . . can we afford to put elevators in our existing facilities at this time of cutbacks and deficits both locally and provincially?

Is it not time to stop trying to be all things to all people? Sometime [sic] reality has to set in and the facts have to be faced. Is it fair to spend time and a sizeable amount of money teaching one person to open a book if he will never be able to read?

"Some Answers Needed"
Fort MacLeod Gazette
September 26, 1990

In fact, clarification about funding became an ongoing issue and at the time we visited the school in March 1994, people were still unclear about funding. We determined that the salaries of the special education teacher and one of the assistants continued to be covered by the RSG grant while the other assistants' salaries were paid for by the Willow Creek School Division's teacher assistant budget. Because of the division's policy to provide education in "as close to the regular classroom as possible" and the assistant superintendent of special education's strong support for this policy, each of these medically fragile students was provided with an assistant to allow integration to happen. The assistant also provided some extra help to regular students as well, as there was never a feeling at G. R. Davis that an assistant was the "exclusive" property of any particular student.

In that second year, a somewhat different approach to integration was tried. Each of the four students with high needs registered in the school was assigned to a particular grade level, most appropriate to their age, although some of the students were older than their peers. The students had the same schedule as their classmates but they also had access to a floating special education room if they needed time out or if the classroom activity was not appropriate for their needs. For all students, regardless of their level of need, the same basic school rule applied:

No one can interfere with the learning of others.

Principal
G. R. Davis School

It was with trepidation that the associate superintendent agreed to the use of a central room for these students because he was afraid it would turn into a special education ghetto and work against the division's policy of integration. But the SDU teacher insisted that these students needed a refuge and it proved to be the case. Classroom teachers also supported this decision but one indicated that even in Year Five, their accommodation was too cramped and was not near a washroom:

> *If we are committed to integration, they should have what they need.*
>
> *Classroom Teacher*
> *G. R. Davis School*

The SDU teacher prepared their IEPs which contained goals of a behavioural nature. Reporting was anecdotal. At the beginning of the year, the regular students in each grade were provided with an orientation to the needs of the students with disabilities. Some of the regular students really enjoyed interacting with these students and some also enjoyed a little one-on-one attention from the assistants. Some also received some remediation from the SDU teacher in the special education room. She and the assistants began to prove their usefulness to the rest of the school.

Year Three (1991–1992)

By the next year, the needs of the students with disabilities were becoming more intense as they tended to suffer from degenerative conditions. They began to have more health problems and were less mobile. The nature of integration was changing but the students were still assigned to a home room and with a floating special education room for backup.

The school received a special grant and installed two elevators, one in each wing of the school, because the physical plant was not conducive to wheelchair access. It had two levels at each end joined by a one-storey walkway. The men's washroom was also modified.

During this period, the SDU teacher also tried to integrate two older students with special needs into the nearby high school. They had a breakfast for the high school staff and the assistant superintendent oriented them to the needs of these students. Parents and staff were amenable to the students being in the school. However, while the first student was relatively comfortable there, the second one and her assistant felt isolated. There was not the same involvement of the school population that there was at G. R. Davis and eventually the assistant superintendent determined that this attempt at integration was not working. No further students were moved up to the high school even through their ages were appropriate.

Throughout these years, G. R. Davis continued to offer a traditional pull-out resource room program.

Year Four (1992–1993)

Early in the fourth year, the resource teacher's position became vacant and the SDU teacher moved into it. She had begun to miss the hands-on work with students as the assistants had the closest contact with the students with high-needs and she no longer had a regular class to teach. After three years, she needed a change.

A replacement was hired at the end of September. She was trained in special education and had one year's teaching experience in a regular classroom. Despite staffing changes, the special education program proceeded much as it had the year before.

Meanwhile, in the resource room, the former SDU teacher spent a lot of time observing students in class and collaborating with their regular teachers. If they were unable to meet the student's needs in class, then pull-out occurred. It quickly became evident that some kids needed to be pulled out because they could not work independently, so she started doing some pull-out for small groups.

Year Five (1993–1994)

The special education teacher spends most of her time in the special education room, or the SDU room as it is still known in the school. In addition, she provides some resource support four times a week in a Grade 4 social studies class, once a week in a Grade 4 math problem-solving class and once a week in a Grade 6 computer class. She describes herself as the "junior resource teacher."

There were 7.64 FTE assistants assigned to G. R. Davis at the time of our visit. Five of them are assigned to students in the special education room. The sixth student in the room is assisted jointly by the special education teacher and one of the five assistants. Of the other assistants, 1.5 are assigned to students who are in regular classrooms, one is a general school assistant and the other is a Native liaison assistant. It is our understanding that these latter two work in the resource room as well as fulfilling their other duties.

The community students spend varying amounts of time in regular classrooms, from 10 minutes to significant amounts of the day.

There is no formal Circle of Friends program in Year Five but students sign up to visit the students with special needs at recess and noon, three at a time. There are about 20 students involved in this visitation program and about half of them are regular visitors. Adult supervision is present but the students choose the activities.

Integration

There is one student with high needs who is not in the special education program at all. He is integrated into a regular classroom all day. We did not get a chance to observe him in class but did learn the following:

Tim

Tim is integrated into Grade 5 most of the time except for the two afternoons a week when he goes for physiotherapy and occasional periods when he leaves the classroom for music classes. His teacher was approached at the beginning of the year to ask if he would be willing to have Tim in his class. The teacher agreed, having worked with integrated students in a previous school. He does a lot of team teaching with a colleague and they seem pleased with the arrangement. It is their feeling that the principal would support the decision no matter which way it had gone.

Tim's regular classroom teacher, along with his assistant, prepare his IPP and also arrange for Tim's physiotherapy at the neuro-muscular unit in Lethbridge. The special education teacher indicates that next year Tim will receive more help from the special education program. She will assist in the development of his IPP and arrange meetings with the appropriate community supports; e.g., physiotherapist, vision specialist, but Tim will remain integrated in a regular classroom.

Resource Room

In the resource room, the new resource teacher finds that so many students have low levels of language development that she has to pull them from class quickly at the beginning of the year. This means that she can not observe in class as she did the year before and so is unable to provide teachers with adapted materials and strategies. She is now working with 45 students, 37 of whom she sees regularly, and all of her 40 periods per week are booked with pull-out. Each of the students who goes to the resource room is tested by the assistant superintendent, his assistant or by herself. Each has an IPP which she prepares but there is limited or no input from the classroom teacher. Program modifications are identified on students' report cards.

Two assistants are assigned to the resource room when they are not booked by regular teachers. However, the resource teacher finds that she is not able to either coordinate their activities or provide them with support.

While the needs of the students in the resource room are evident, she does not feel that the pull-out approach is effective enough. One classroom teacher told us that while she has two students with severe learning disabilities who visit the resource room, she has four or five others who can not be accommodated. These students do not have IEPs but she modifies her program where necessary using the Whole Language approach.

The resource teacher and the principal want to change the resource room program but they have learned some important lessons from the special education program's rocky start. These include:

> 1. *Provide adequate preparation time for staff, parents and students to understand and plan for it before it is implemented.*
>
> 2. *Provide levels of integration according to the needs of the individual child.*
>
> *Resource Room Teacher*
> *G. R. Davis School*

A draft outline of the program was already in circulation by March of the year prior to implementation to obtain feedback from staff and to encourage ownership. They are looking at alternative ways of providing these students with help and, in the principal's words, they are "drifting" away from pull-out. For the principal, the advantage of the old program was the one-on-one attention which students received in the resource room. This seemed to build self-esteem and school survival skills, and, in many cases, academic skills as well. However, the main disadvantage of the pull-out program is that the resource room provides a different context from the regular classroom. The resource teacher does not know the expectations of the regular classroom teachers and the students have difficulty generalizing their resource room skills to the regular classroom. A second disadvantage for the principal is the fact that regular teachers look upon the resource room as a quick fix and a way to avoid ownership for these students with special needs.

The new plan for a more inclusive special education program will attempt to have the resource teachers go into regular classrooms more to serve a greater number of students and to have regular teachers more involved in IPP preparation.

Its proposed objectives are:

> 1. *To provide a more flexible approach to resource room support*
> 2. *To provide meaningful interventions; strategies that can be used in everyday classroom activities for students with learning challenges*
> 3. *To reach students who have not met pull out program requirements but need help in the classrooms (the kids who fall through the cracks)*
>
> *Resource Room Restructuring (Draft)*
> *G. R. Davis School*

They feel that being in classrooms allows resource teachers to understand both teachers' academic and behavioural expectations of students and the classroom language used to develop concepts, to watch students learning in the classroom setting and to develop interventions that a student can use within the classroom context. Pull-out programs will still be available for intensive skill remediation for both the short-and-long term. In addition, the resource teachers plan to work on an individualized basis with Grade 7 students who are likely to be moving into vocational programs in the high school.

Special Education

There are six students with high-needs in the program and five assistants. Three of the original SDU students remain and there are three new students from the community. The health of the three original students continues to deteriorate. They are still registered in a home-room class but some of them spend little time there. At this point their programs are in maintenance mode and the special education teacher says she will be happy if they have the same skills at the end of the year as at the beginning. The special education program receives assistance from the Pediatric Neuro-muscular Unit in Lethbridge and by the REACH team from Calgary.

The fragile students are on a number of medications which are dispensed by the assistants. This task is part of their job description. Letters are on file for each student giving the school permission to store and administer medication. The assistants are trained by either SDU staff, or in one case, by a parent who trains one of the assistants to tube feed her daughter which she does two or three times a day.

The medications sometimes cause the students to be lethargic. As a result, during their down time, the special education teacher and assistants work on resource room activities or test marking or materials preparation to assist other teachers in the school.

The three SDU students in the special education room include the following:

Eve

Eve, aged 13, has tuberous scoliosis with calcium deposits on the brain and severe mental disabilities. She lost one eye due to a tumour. She had luque rods implanted in her spine but they subsequently broke. She is losing tolerance for stimulation and becomes frustrated easily, responding in a self-abusive manner. She has little volume control and so it is hard for her to join a class except where noise is not a problem. The amount of time she spends in a regular class is diminishing.

The impact of her involvement in the school is positive, according to staff at the SDU. She enjoys interacting with other children and the traditional Circle of Friends offers her a lot of exposure she would not have received at the unit. Even though the Circle of Friends was not operative in Year Five, some girls came in regularly at noon hour to comb Eve's hair and play with her.

Harry

Harry, aged 15, has subacute nonsclerosing panencephalitis due to measles which he contracted at age six that caused continuing brain damage. He is now almost completely dependent and is in a wheelchair all the time. He attends school for two full days and two half days a week and then returns to the SDU. He goes home to his family once a week.

Nicky

Nicky, aged 19, has cerebral palsy with arrested hydrocephaly, cortical blindness and severe seizure activity. Due to his age, he is in his last year in school. He has severe scoliosis and as a result has diminishing lung capacity which makes his breathing laboured and causes him to get respiratory infections. He attends full days but is extremely lethargic. The staff in the special education room are working to maintain his physical functioning.

The students from the community who attend the special education room included:

Britt

Britt, aged 11, has Retts Syndrome. She lives with her parents and sister. She attended elementary school for several years but is now almost completely dependent.

She is fed with a gastro tube which is permanently attached. She tends to be alert and has favourite people, particularly her assistant, about whom she can be possessive. She receives medication for seizures and can be lethargic, so staff let her stay in the special education room if she is tired.

Generally, however, she spends 12 to 15 periods a week in a regular Grade 4 class. The staff feel that she understands a lot. She is well accepted by the other children.

Sam

Sam, aged nine, has cerebral palsy with fine and gross motor skill problems and some delay in processing information. He can not speak but understands everything that is said to him and is observant. He is sociable and loves to interact with other children. He is well accepted by staff and peers. He lives at home with his parents and brother.

He was integrated from Kindergarten to Grade 3 but had a history of serious behaviour problems and perhaps, as a result, did not gain many academic skills in primary school. In addition, he is not toilet trained. The special education teacher feels that he has to be pulled out now to build requisite skills for integration later. There is also a time-out room for him to use when necessary. In Grade 4, he is only in class two periods a day. Sam believes himself to be normal. The fact that he is in the special education room this year is a concern to his mother who says he picked up a rocking habit from one of the other students. However, staff saw this behaviour infrequently. Sam saw himself as a helper to the other students in the room.

His assistant is related to Sam's mother and is the only one, according to his mother, who is able to handle him. Her approach is to be strict with Sam. She keeps an eagle eye on him and if he does not behave, either at school or out in the community, she hears about it and Sam has to deal with her. She forces him to be independent and refuses to be manipulated into doing things for him. Out in the hall, I watched Sam struggle to put his books into his knapsack. He looked around for help but none was forthcoming so he did it himself and then crawled into the special education room with a big smile on his face. His mother is worried that funding cutbacks to the division might cause his assistant to have to look for work elsewhere. She is really pleased with the progress they have made together.

Barry

Barry, aged 15, has Sturge Webber Syndrome — a port wine facial birth mark and severe seizure activity which has caused mental disabilities and visual impairment. He lives at home, about 10 kilometres out of town with his seven siblings who attend a private Dutch Reform school in another district.

His family moved from another school jurisdiction the previous year. In that district, the school board supported half of the costs the parents incurred for psychological services from REACH and half of the costs of a private school. In Willow Creek, the board did not place Barry in a private school setting and were not willing to support services beyond those provided by G. R. Davis. His parents were told that Barry would have a full-time assistant, but in fact he only has one half time.

His mother is disappointed that Barry has not been toilet trained and she is beginning to think that this will never happen. She says that the staff take him to the washroom at specific times. The school tried to integrate Barry into a regular class in the fall but his parents did not feel that he benefited from this placement. They are not interested in him acquiring daily living skills apart from feeding himself and remaining stimulated and interested. They also do not want him integrated because they feel that his seizures might be upsetting for his classmates. He does not want to interact with other children and is not comfortable with them. He is on a lot of medication which makes him lethargic.

By March he is going into the Grade 5 class for only 10 minutes a day for story reading. His assistant takes him swimming every day at a local motel pool and he loves the water. This activity engages him more than any other. During our two-day visit, we observed that, apart from his early morning walks and his swimming sessions, Barry sleeps most of the time.

The IEP Process

The special education teacher prepares IEPs for the six students with input from the relevant assistant, the parents and SDU representative, the classroom teacher and the assistant superintendent. The plans include the students' activities related to physio and occupational therapy, speech pathology, the neuro-muscular unit and REACH as well as in-class activities. Reporting for these students is anecdotal.

Communications

A communications book goes home every day with each of the six students. The assistants report daily activities and physical health concerns and a response comes back from the parents, or the SDU staff, as three still live at the SDU. Meetings are held several times a year to discuss the IEPs with all relevant parties.

Staff at the SDU judge communications with the school to be quite open. They meet with school staff when the REACH team visits from Calgary. In a similar way, the SDU staff involve the same group in their development of their clients' IEPs. Generally, their programming goals are similar and the two programs are able to reinforce each other to enhance program continuity.

Teacher Support

The regular classroom teachers do not receive any additional planning or preparation time for integration, either at the beginning of the year or on a weekly basis. External support is provided by REACH and by the neuro-muscular unit in Lethbridge. These agencies are under contract with the school jurisdiction but it is a concern for the principal as to whether they are getting sufficient value for their money or if a fee-for-service basis might be more efficient.

Inservices are provided for the assistants in the areas of medications, use of wheelchairs, and how to lift the disabled by the former SDU teacher.

Outcomes

While integration has changed from year to year at G. R. Davis, depending on the needs of the students at hand, overall the program is successful. As the assistant superintendent said, "It has worked a lot better than a lot of people thought it would."

The principal feels that the very presence of the students with high needs has been beneficial to the school:

> *The integration process did not happen the way it should have in this school and there are still people who question the integration of every child but the value of having them here is because they are a constant reminder of how lucky we and our children are. They are human beings and require love and respect . . . Our attitudes have become more positive as a result of their presence.*
>
> *Principal*
> *G. R. Davis School*

Teachers' views about integration as it developed at G. R. Davis are positive mostly with regard to its impact on other students as the following comments indicate:

> *A lot of really positive changes have occurred. There is a tremendous commitment on the part of the special education teacher and the assistants. The special needs kids have become involved with other kids in a variety of ways. They go to their room and help. It is good bonding and a lot of kids have become more aware of what integration means.*
>
> *She is part of the group. The children move her around the room. They will sit with her and hold her hands.*
>
> *Attitudes are becoming more accepting of severely handicapped children.*
>
> *A very positive change for teachers and students.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *G. R. Davis School*

However, there has been limited or no impact on their own teaching practice apart from the assistance provided by the SDU assistants. They are still bitter about the way the change was implemented and continue to have certain reservations:

> *Staff response was very negative or mixed. We were insecure and frightened of these kids. We didn't understand what was going on or what was expected of us. Now we are concerned about what the impact will be with funding cuts.*
>
> *Every one of us was deathly against having them here. We didn't have the room for them. So much time has been given to them.*
>
> *Some staff feel that too many resources are put into these kids.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *G. R. Davis School*

From the perspective of staff at the SDU, the social interaction and child-focused activities offered by the school environment for the students with special needs is positive and could not have been achieved in their facility.

Attachment 1

G. R. Davis School

Special Education Policy

SPECIAL EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

Special education includes all aspects of education from curriculum modification to facility alteration, which are designed to provide successful experiences for exceptional students.

The term "exceptional" when applied to students has included those who are especially gifted or talented, and such students are now included in the same manner as students with educational disabilities in the programs and funding for special education. Special education funding is, therefore, applicable to programs for the gifted or talented, as well as to programs for students with educational disabilities. A student who is educationally disabled, gifted, or talented is defined as an "exceptional student."

An exceptional student is one who deviates from the average or normal child in the physical, cognitive, emotional, or social areas of development to such an extent as to require educational services beyond those that can be adequately provided in a regular school program. Exceptional students may have abilities which are significantly above or below average; these students will have disabilities or needs which require special education services.

Special education services in the Willow Creek School Division No. 28 are divided into two major divisions: programs and services. Programs may include integrated or segregated special classes, resource rooms, alternate programs, individual integrated programs, and enrichment activities.

Services include personnel who support teachers of exceptional pupils. The personnel may be school based in the case of teacher assistants and counsellors, centrally based in the case of assistant superintendent and enrichment teacher, or community-based services may also be used to support special programs.

POLICY

The Board supports the provision of education programs for exceptional students who have special needs, whether the students are gifted, talented, or educationally disabled.

The needs and educational requirements of students, as well as benefits therefrom, will be the main factors considered when placing students in special programs.

The Board further supports the position that programs and services may have to be altered from time to time to meet the changing needs of exceptional students. This means that existing student services resources are allotted to schools on a priority basis, and that a program transfer or termination may be necessary from time to time because of the changing special needs of children.

GUIDELINES

1. *Policies, guidelines and procedures for the identification, referral, assessment, placement, and programming of exceptional students will be outlined in the Willow Creek Student Services Handbook.*

2. *Policies, guidelines and procedures for the maintenance and evaluation of programs and services for exceptional students will be outlined in the Willow Creek Student Services Handbook.*

3. *A policy of integrating exceptional students in regular school programs will be followed and practiced whenever appropriate.*

4. *Special education grants are designated for programs for the educationally disabled, gifted and talented.*

PROCEDURES

1. *The policies and procedures outlined in the Willow Creek Student Services Handbook will be followed and used to guide the operation of student services programs. The policies, guidelines, and procedures in the handbook may be amended from time to time under the direction of the assistant superintendent and with the approval of the Board.*

2. *Written parent consent is required before a student is placed in a resource, special education, or alternate program.*

3. *Individual program plans will be developed for students in resource, special education, and individual integrated programs, but excluding alternate programs.*

4. *Individual student placements in special programs will be reviewed at least annually by the teacher and the school principal and his/her designate.*

5. *In resource rooms, a formal review shall be completed of any student program where the student program exceeds two consecutive years. Such a review will focus on diagnostic information, program objectives, and student progress, and will be completed by the teacher, school principal, or designate, and the assistant superintendent.*

6. *Parents or guardians will be notified of any changes in the placement of students in special programs.*

7. *The evaluation of programs and services in Student Services will focus on topics such as diagnostic methods, placement procedures, program planning, instructional methods, communication, and student progress.*

8. *Teacher assistants may be assigned to a school to provide supervised paraprofessional service to exceptional children.*

9. *An appeal procedure will be available to parents or guardians who dispute a placement decision affecting an exceptional student.*

Case Study #6 — Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School

From the street, you would not know that there is a busy high school tucked behind the shopping centre. Dr. E. P. Scarlett is a warm and welcoming high school built on an open area concept — since modified. The library is at the centre of the school and classrooms fan off around it. It was an early dismissal day because of parent-teacher interviews. With 1460 students registered in the school, this would seem to be a massive undertaking but the staff took it in stride and the interview process moved ahead smoothly. Because we were at the school while the interviews were taking place, we were fortunate enough to be able to interview a number of parents of students with learning disabilities who were enrolled in the learning assistance program (LAP) in the school. Every one of the parents echoed what one stated categorically:

> *There is no doubt that if this program were not here, our son would have dropped out.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Philosophy and Policy

In the late 80's, the principal of Scarlett was a long-time employee of the Calgary Board of Education who held a number of positions over the years including associate superintendent of special education. He was principal there for six years. When he started, the concept of integration was not widespread. However, he held a strong belief in the rights of all students to an education and he was not willing to let this go. It took him two years to persuade central office to move ahead with the program and he did not mind the fact that his teachers saw him fighting to get it. As he said,

> *The staff has to see that the principal is willing to go to the wall for a special education program because teachers can kill a program faster than anything else.*
>
> *Former Principal*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Programming and Implementation

Learning Assistance Program Development (1990–1993)

The principal had to find the right teacher to set up the program. The learning strategies teacher he hired, taught for many years in elementary school, had worked on a graduate diploma in the education of exceptional children and had taught special education in a small junior-senior high school. She shared the principal's philosophy about students with learning disabilities. At that time, the two assistant principals at the school formerly worked in schools with programs in individualized, competency-based instruction and so they also strongly supported the development of a program for students with special needs.

It was important to position the program appropriately in the school, so a classroom was selected which was central and close to the library. Administration was able to support the program with appropriate furniture, resources and computers. The result was a well-stocked and cheerful classroom with small tables, individual study carrels, nine or 10 computers and a few comfortable chairs. An outside telephone line was installed to assist the teacher in her consultations with external resources. People described it as an *oasis* in the busy school.

The students received psychological assessments and were diagnosed with learning disabilities. Many were considered students with special needs and were in segregated classrooms from about Grade 3 but there was a variety of backgrounds. About 75% have had services since elementary school — not all in segregated settings.

The learning strategies teacher started out with a Grade 10 program and added a grade each year until all grades were covered. Her approach was low key. She did not want to draw attention to the program or to arouse any negative feelings among the other teachers by appearing to be an expert or by appearing favoured because she worked with fewer students. Building and maintaining rapport with the regular classroom teachers was essential to the program. It was critical that they see the program as supportive rather than adding to their workload. Some were hesitant to take a student with learning disabilities at first but after she had worked with them regarding one student, they were more willing to accept another. She worked extremely hard to meet not only the students' needs but those of the teachers as well. The learning strategies teacher made a point of providing the teachers with feedback and thanking them when something went well. She also made sure that administration heard about teachers' good work. She felt that collaboration and team work among the regular teachers, the parents and the students were really critical to the program success. Undoubtedly it was the regular classroom teachers who made it work.

In fact, the learning strategies teacher and the regular teachers seemed to learn from each other. She was impressed at some of the ideas that classroom teachers came up with and they also appreciated the way she could devise alternate strategies. Before she knew it, the teachers were coming to her to ask for strategies and suggestions to use with regular students as well.

The administration and staff tried not to label students. They never talked about *learning disabilities*, they talked about *learning assistance*. In the third year, the learning assistance room was used as a peer tutoring centre (the program had been in the school for a while) and this helped to highlight the fact that many students learned in different ways. The central location of the LAP classroom and the positive attitudes of the students as they experienced success in their courses also helped to dispel any stigma that might be attached to the room. There appeared to be wide acceptance of learning disabilities and the school's student newspaper featured articles on learning disabilities.

No formal inservice was provided but at the beginning of the program the learning strategies teacher spoke at a staff meeting. She stressed the fact that the teachers were the experts in their subject area but that she could provide support and strategies which might help them do their job. Since then, the inservice has continued to be informal.

The teachers did not feel they needed generalized inservice. Some felt it would be too theoretical. Rather, they preferred to deal with the specific problems at hand. As two teachers explained:

> *. . . this is really satisfactory. [The LAP teachers] are there when I need them and available when I have questions . . . Since I started working with the kids I have never felt abandoned. They are there to help me.*
>
> *It depends on what students come; then we will tackle that.*
>
> *I would take advantage of teachers' inservices at Teachers' Convention if it were applicable.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

One teacher saw a video on dyslexia which was a powerful experience.

To get the program up and running, the learning strategies teacher worked without spares for the first three semesters. By the third year there were over 30 students in the program and so a second teacher was added. She also was trained and experienced in special education. The principal gave the learning strategies teacher input in the selection of her teaching partner as he thought it was essential that they work as a team. Each of them worked with a separate group of students and followed them through the grades as they felt it was important to have a good knowledge of their needs.

Learning Assistance Program Structure and Process (1993–1994)

Placement

Student placement is managed by student services and students are generally timetabled by the school computer. In the case of the students with learning disabilities, the department, in consultation with the LAP teachers, makes sure that they are matched in classes with teachers whose teaching styles and personalities fit with students' needs. As one teacher commented:

> *No [regular] teacher input in terms of placement. It is an unwritten rule that teachers are chosen on the basis of their willingness to accept these students. Probably there was a small proportion at first and repeated success has caused the group to grow.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

At the beginning of the term, teachers receive their class lists and a memo from the learning strategies teacher identifying their LAP students. Consultations are set up as soon as possible with the teachers. Both LAP teachers have pleasant but assertive personalities and are able to ensure that the LAP students' needs are met in the regular classroom.

Structure

At the time of our visit, Scarlett has 82 teachers, four guidance counsellors, three administrators and two learning strategy teachers. The LAP is located in the student services department, which includes the counsellors, the resource teacher, the advanced placement coordinator, the librarian and the LAP teachers. The whole focus of the department is to provide support to students to keep them in school and encountering success.

Normally, LAP students are enrolled in three out of four regular classes. As the school is on a semester system, four classes constitutes a full load. They generally spend their fourth class in the LAP room for a learning support class. Students are never pulled out of class. Indeed, the individualized nature of senior high programming lends itself to meeting the special needs of students with learning disabilities.

In Grade 10, the LAP students are registered for their fourth course in Reading 10 for individualized learning support and study skills. It is important to these students, particularly at that level, to be receiving credit for their work. It also provides an element of accountability in that students can fail the course if they do not perform. After Grade 10, most students are able to see the value of the program. However, the opportunity is there in both Grade 11 and Grade 12 to obtain credit for one special projects course per year. Students in those grades sometimes have spare periods anyway, so it is not perceived as a problem to spend their spare in the LAP room, in fact by that point students are quite willing to attend.

As one student commented:

> *I like this program a lot more than the junior high program I was in. We were in the same class all day and not doing the work we were supposed to be doing [i.e., not at grade level]. This way I do the work I'm supposed to be doing and then get extra help when I need it.*
>
> *Grade 11 Student*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

The option is there, however, for students to try integration for four out of four courses and come to the room for support after school. The learning strategies teacher commented that students' marks often drop 10–15% without the support. Occasionally a student requires more time in the LAP room, and one or two spend up to three periods a day there. However, the goal is always integration.

Gain Plans

All students with diagnosed learning disabilities who were placed in the LAP had formal *Gain Plans — Goals (Derived From) Assessment (Of) Individual Needs*. These are one-page summaries of learning strategies and goals for the students. Like an IPP, they are signed by the student's parent but do not go into the same detail as an IPP and do not require input from the regular teacher. The school report for all students with a special placement at the CBE is a detailed six to 10 page document which includes the Gain Plan. (See Attachment 1 for an Outline.) The learning strategies teacher is concerned that formal IPPs with the associated consultation process will be perceived as a lot of extra work by regular teachers and might be difficult to achieve, considering the fact that teachers' schedules are all different. Student tracking tends to be informal. Teachers drop into the LAP room at noon hour or after school to discuss student progress or they talk in passing in the staff room or as they pick up their mail.

Program Modification

Teachers repeatedly commented that programs are not modified for LAP students and that programming and standards are their decision. Instead, it is the way the program is delivered that might vary. As one teacher elaborated:

> *The program is the same but I modify:*
>
> 1. *Methods — They can go to the LD room to work on assignments, to have peer tutoring or individual help*
> 2. *Expectations — I recognize minimal improvements more than otherwise to build confidence but I don't change the standards (especially in Grades 11 and 12)*
> 3. *Time — I am flexible with deadlines. I am more concerned that they finish the task than that it be in at the same time as everyone else.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

However, administrators did cite an example of program modification when one LAP student took English 13 twice and was not able to pass. He was allowed to move into English 23 which he passed and then he received retroactive credit for English 13.

Reporting is the same for the LAP students as for regular students in the school. Classroom teachers stress the fact that they do not change their standards for these students. In addition to the regular report, however, parents of these students receive anecdotal feedback on the Gain Plans.

Strategies

When we asked the LAP teachers to tell us what strategies they employ to assist students, they quickly listed a wide variety of approaches, saying however that there are many more depending on the needs of the individual student. Their list follows:

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

1. **Exam Writing**	◆ *Audiotaping of exam questions and assignments* ◆ *Obtaining permission from Alberta Education for students to have extra time to write exams* ◆ *Supervision of final exams requiring extra time* ◆ *Screening assignment/test questions so that only one is presented at a time* ◆ *Using computers for exam writing*
2. **Aids to Writing**	◆ *Scribing for students who provide answers orally* ◆ *Computer support for writing skills, including spellchecking* ◆ *Pre-writing activities (clustering, mind mapping, outlining)* ◆ *Journal writing*
3. **Aids to Reading**	◆ *Varying font size, type of paper, etc. to counteract processing problems* ◆ *Obtaining resources such as taped materials prepared for the visually impaired (also useful for those with learning disabilities)* ◆ *Vocabulary building*
4. **Memory/Organization Skills**	◆ *Developing flash cards for memorization* ◆ *Using daily planners to keep students organized*
5. **Learning Strategies**	◆ *Using cooperative learning strategies* ◆ *Peer tutoring*
6. **Goal Setting**	◆ *Weekly goal setting with self-evaluation of effort and achievement (then approved by teachers)* ◆ *Contracting by the term with students for desired results in the LAP* ◆ *Annual goal setting with action planning (signed by student, parent and teacher)*
7. **Behavioural Support**	◆ *Anger management* ◆ *Assertiveness training* ◆ *Support in social skills*

LAP Teachers
Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School

Another significant strategy is teacher collaboration. As one teacher explained the process:

> *[The LAP staff] work intensively with them. (I have four in my room and they would not be in my class in a regular system.) They are working well and when one of them has a problem, he goes to [the learning strategies teacher] and she comes to me for content information and then she works with the kid.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Communications

Regular meetings include weekly guidance department meetings, monthly student services meetings and *ad hoc* school resource group meetings to discuss individual students' progress. These can include administration, counsellors, teachers, parents and students and outside resources such as psychologists or police.

Informal communication appears to be the way teachers most often communicate with LAP staff. The learning strategies teacher is described by them as taking an assertive role in contacting them for updates on student progress in both skills and attitudes and for clarifying students' learning problems. Occasionally, they communicate with the administrative staff regarding behaviour issues.

Communication with parents is a key part of the program. All 11 of the parents interviewed commented on the close communications they have with their child's LAP teacher:

> *We keep in very close touch with the learning strategies teacher. She wants to know where he is coming from in his life at home. She talks to us together and also to his father. She encourages him to set goals. She talks about the different methods of teaching she uses.*
>
> *[Communication] has been very good. We meet often. We are always apprised of tests coming up. We get a written report on his strengths and weaknesses.*
>
> *I called for a meeting before he started Grade 10. She had all his tests; my son was involved too. She helped organize his schedule and plan regarding problems. So far he is working hard.*
>
> *Parents*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Another parent commented that formerly he was in close contact with the learning strategies teacher but that this was no longer required:

> *When my son came three years ago, we discussed lots of things. We met more frequently then. We decided in what areas she could work with him. Now she knows him so well that we don't discuss nearly as much.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

The learning strategies teacher was invited to speak to the parent advisory council on the services provided (all of guidance department). As one parent commented:

> *Regular school teachers traditionally have been resistant to providing specialized services. Teachers at first don't think the LD kids need special modifications or teaching. [The learning strategies teacher] is a real advocate for her students.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

The LAP teachers do not have a lot of contact with administrators at central office and their program is seldom visited by them apart from formal program reviews, usually three times a year.

Resource Room Program

The resource room is located in a high-traffic area inside the library and has one wall of windows looking across the library and out into the main hall. The resource room teacher is a long-time English and resource room teacher who returned to school recently to study guidance and counselling. She teaches one course each term — most recently sewing and science and she feels this helps her credibility with regular teachers. It also allows her to get to know one class of students better.

She deals with all students with special needs not in the LAP room. Students are not segregated but come for support before and after school and during their spare periods. The high school schedule makes this flexibility possible and as she pointed out, students can come for help without being labelled. In addition, she is responsible for students' council and as a result, many students without learning difficulties are frequently in her room as well. Regular teachers support the program because it happens outside of class and helps students be successful in class.

Referrals often come from teachers. Sometimes they give her a list of students with learning needs. They send students for help with study skills, reading strategies, exam preparation and dealing with anxiety. Sometimes teachers identify a student who might have an undiagnosed learning disability. In that case, she will work with the student, parents and teacher while doing the preparatory work to get the student tested for possible admission to the LAP. She also works with gifted students.

Students sometimes refer themselves for extra help. She also works with students with physical needs. For example she worked with a student with spina bifida the previous term, and a student who was a prospective heart-lung transplant patient during the term of our visit.

Many referrals come from the office and have to do with behaviour concerns. She supports students with an attention deficit by working indirectly with the student's teachers and by supervising the student during her fourth period every day. But as the resource room teacher said, some students are *sentenced* to her room by the office as a last resort. For example, one student did his accounting course in the resource room. The alternative was being removed from class altogether.

She meets with the LAP teachers every week at their department meeting and they discuss mutual problems and issues. She is also in close contact with the parents of students she works with. None of the students who access the resource room have IPPs.

Outcomes

Student Outcomes

Administrators are surprised that the program works as well as it does. Their support for integration going into the program was confirmed and intensified with the results they observed.

Academic Outcomes

Administrators commented that it is amazing to see the LAP students write the diploma exams and succeed. They might require extra time (permission granted by Alberta Education) or to have the exam on audiotape to help them process the questions, but they are doing well — not just passing — but doing well. They cited a comment from one student who said that the LAP was the only thing that kept his head above water. Another student commented that his marks doubled from those in junior high.

Teachers also commented on LAP students' academic successes. One student was among the top five students in the advanced placement mathematics course. His teacher does not mind spending the extra time required to help him verbalize.

Teacher comments about academic outcomes included the following:

> *Most of the time they are ahead of others in the class. These kids are in the middle or higher.*
>
> *Last year an LD kid had the second highest mark.*
>
> *I have two cases right now of significant improvement in writing.*
>
> *I have four kids in Science 10. They are all functioning well and are passing the course. They are doing everything they would normally be afraid of and they are doing well.*
>
> *They are welcomed — most of them are a real asset to the class.*
>
> *The degree of success has surprised me. The kids don't just get 52%, they get 78%. They are doing good quality work.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Another teacher described a student who was no longer attending the LAP room:

> *One student I have now was in it last semester. I couldn't see that he needed that help. He didn't see it either. He said, "I don't need that class and I don't want to go." He is functioning fine.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Parents gave examples of their children's academic success:

> *At birth, she experienced a brain trauma. She repeated Grade 1. In 1994, she is getting 93% in English 33.*
>
> *She is on the Honour Roll.*
>
> *He reads more. They do a lot of reading in Reading 10 while they are waiting their turn with the teacher.*
>
> *His grades are much higher.*
>
> *His self-esteem is going up. He bragged about his English mark. He loves school.*
>
> *Parents*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

One parent commented on the fact that her child received life skills information about mortgages, banking and insurance:

> *His fear of math has been taken away through the use of life skills. Now he feels encouraged to try the next level and is willing to attempt to go further.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Student Success and Retention In School

The learning strategies teacher provided the figures for student success rates for the first four years of the program. She defines *success* as *a student passing most or all courses with teacher satisfaction at the effort expended.*

Success Rates in the Learning Assistance Program

Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School

Year	Program Outcome	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Year 1 (1990–1991)	Students registered	14	1	
	Successful completion	10 (71.4%)	1 (100%)	
	Unsuccessful/Repeats	4 (28.6%)*	0	
	Dropouts/Transfers	3 (21.4%)*	0	
Year 2 (1991–1992)	Students registered	6	12	
	Successful completion	6 (100%)	9 (75%)	
	Unsuccessful/Repeats	0	0	
	Dropouts	0	4 (25%)	
Year 3 (1992–1993)	Students registered	16	6	8
	Successful completion	11 (68.7%)	5 (83.3%)	8 (100%)
	Unsuccessful/Repeats	0	0	0
	Dropouts	5 (45.4%)	1 (16.6%)	0
Year 4 (1993–1994)	Students registered	14	14	9
	Successful completion	10 (71.4%)	11 (78.6%)	5 (55.6%)
	Unsuccessful/Repeats	3 (21.4%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (33.3%)
	Dropouts	1 (7.1%)	2 (14.3%)	1 (11.1%)

* Overlap in categories

The overall dropout rates in Scarlett rose from 7% in Grade 10 to 11% in Grade 12. While dropout rates were significantly higher for this high-risk population, the learning strategies teacher associated lack of success to a history of attendance and/or substance abuse problems as opposed to academic difficulties. It appears evident that students who remain in the LAP until Grade 12 are much more likely to be successful than typical students with diagnosed learning disabilities.

As one student who was interviewed commented:

> *If it weren't for this program, I wouldn't be here.*
>
> *Grade 11 Student*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Teachers also supported this view:

> *Those kids that are being successful would not be without the support.*
>
> *If it wasn't available, the kids would fail and drop out.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

And, as noted above, parents echoed this sentiment. Typical comments included:

> *He would have slipped through the cracks without the program. Tutoring wouldn't have been enough. The LAP teacher has been a catalyst for him. She provides the one-on-one he needs. He relaxes with her; she can communicate with him better than us. She is working with him on post-secondary goals right now.*
>
> *Students like our son need a lot of help. The kids are successful because of the help they get. Regular classroom teachers don't have time for individualized help.*
>
> *Parents*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Personal/Behavioural Outcomes

Administrators commented that LAP students entering Grade 10 are often noticeable as behaviour problems. However, by Grade 12 they change considerably. Their confidence and sense of accountability really change their behaviour. One parent commented to administrators, "You have taught my child about setting goals." The administrators give a lot of credit to the regular teachers who work with these students and perhaps are more tolerant of their behaviour because they understand their learning difficulties. Because the

LAP teacher is there to provide support, the teachers often take their problems to her instead of making a discipline referral to the school office.

The most frequently cited personal outcome for LAP students is their growth in self-confidence and self-esteem:

> *I may change my approach slightly, but they handle it like they are a part of everything. When they do it, you should see how good they feel.*
>
> *You see them being more confident and being able to risk, asking questions, helping others, etc.*
>
> *In terms of classroom behaviour, the kids are indistinguishable from any other.*
>
> *I have been really impressed with the work ethics of the kids who have been brought in. They know they have to compensate. They are really committed and use the strategies.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Parents echoed this view:

> *The support he has had from this teacher is wonderful but the self-esteem he gets that he is OK and has some strengths makes him feel so much more competent and capable.*
>
> *Academically he has been very successful. A lot of credit goes to [the LAP teacher]. He seems to have more confidence in his work. His course work is easier. He likes school and is not frustrated any more. In Grade 8 his behaviour was going downhill. He was acting out and was frustrated. He has been wonderful [this year].*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Similarly, goal setting abilities improved significantly:

> *The best thing is that the learning strategies teacher has helped him set goals; e.g., to achieve a grade of 75. He either makes the goal or decides why he has not made it. This is the first time he has ever taken his education seriously and it is just wonderful.*
>
> *Parent*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Social Outcomes

Another LAP student in Grade 10 was selected for the lead role in the school's drama festival. This was unusual in itself because major parts usually went to Grade 12 students. The fact that this student had a learning disability as well sent an important signal to students and staff in the school.

One teacher commented:

> *It is a great place for them to learn to relate to their peers. One student has learned how to deal with his anger, stop inappropriate comments and handle competition.*
>
> *Teacher*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

A frequent comment was that there is no social stigma attached to attending the LAP room.

Parents remarked:

> *It has been good for our family in general. Otherwise, he would have been frustrated, angry and destructive.*
>
> *His attitude at home is positive. He found a part-time job . . . He was never classified as LD. He is integrated with his own friends. This program is desperately needed so he can get on with his life.*
>
> *Parents*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Post-secondary and/or Career Goals

One Grade 12 LAP student excelled in English and went for his work experience program at The Calgary Sun. He was later hired on part-time and has already been published under his own by-line.

Another student, described by his parents as being a slow learner with physical problems, was on a work experience program at Shopper's Drug Mart and plans to go into the transitional/vocational program at Mount Royal College in September.

Parents are pleased with their children's tenacity, confidence and plans for the future:

> *He is still talking about going to University. I don't know if he is naive or if it is possible. I'm amazed at his tenacity and confidence.*
>
> *This program has allowed him to look to the future.*
>
> *He is planning on getting his diploma in Grade 12. It will be a major milestone.*
>
> *Parents*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Staff Outcomes

The teachers at Dr. E. P. Scarlett are unanimously positive in their support of the LAP. Typical comments include:

> *No negatives. We have a very positive attitude to integration. The school really supports the program.*
>
> *The teachers are very accepting of these students . . . The teachers value the program. Students are usually guided into the appropriate course level and have the support they need so teachers are very supportive.*
>
> *The LD resource teachers are excellent in explaining the LD kids' needs [to us].*
>
> *I no longer flinch when I'm getting an LD kid.*
>
> *If integration means without support, it scares me. If it means what we have now with intensive and extensive support — great!*
>
> *I was concerned about the workload prior to having LD students in my class. I feel the payoff is well worth the extra effort.*
>
> *[The learning strategies teacher] had to do a lot of work to prove they wouldn't be a burden to the teachers.*
>
> *We understand a lot more about the kids. More positive. It makes me feel good as a teacher because I can do some good. Before I would have thrown up my hands and said, "Take this kid away!" Now they give me a perspective . . . I didn't expect the tremendous rewards of working with these kids . . . I get a kick out of them rather than some of the high flyers. Some of the biggest rewards of my teaching career (also some of my biggest disappointments).*
>
> *I am surprised at the success. It has been less of a struggle for me as a teacher and for my LD students than I expected. With the help they get here, it is working. If I were alone, I doubt it would work.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

The learning strategies teacher observes that classroom teachers are making more accommodations for a variety of student needs, not just for those in LAP. Four years ago, she was certain that teachers would have balked at the idea of giving a student more time for an exam or at extending the length of a project. Now, however, most teachers have become more aware of individual learning needs and seem more willing to allow students to show their true potential. They now come to the LAP room and suggest that a student (not necessarily an LAP student) might need an audiotape or a computer to complete an assignment. Use of the resource teacher has increased as well because teachers are more aware of learning problems in general and other students are benefiting as well.

When asked if their own teaching practice has changed as a result of this program, several teachers had examples to cite:

> *I try to incorporate tidbits I get from [the learning strategies teacher] into my regular teaching. I am a lot more aware of when I am not communicating with kids or about reasons for behaviour. I am more patient than before.*
>
> *I use different ways of presenting material, check to see if I have missed anything, to see if material is covered well enough. It makes you reinforce the idea of a step-by-step process. I use short-term goals and break down the process even more. You get in the habit of saying to everyone else about the mini-steps within a large step. You check more as you go along.*
>
> *I spend more time working individually with students . . . I write problems down so that students can read and understand . . . I repeat instructions because of some kids.*
>
> *Teachers*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

Community Impacts

The community perception of the program is positive and students ask to come to the school to attend the program. The school has the reputation of working well with students with exceptional needs and of providing a caring environment. There are even a number of professionals in the community, such as physicians and psychologists, who refer students to the school. Administrators feel that the basis of the reputation lies in the LAP and resource room programs at the school but that growth in the attitudes of regular teachers helps to support this view. For their part, the teachers are not sure that the program is well known, apart from the high awareness on the part of students' parents.

Future Directions

With drop-out and attendance problems being serious for regular students, those with learning disabilities are even more vulnerable. At the time of the case study, the future of the LAP is in jeopardy due to government cutbacks in funding and a board decision to put all resource teachers back in the pupil-teacher ratio. However, administration conducted an informal poll of teachers. They took a day and invited teachers to talk to them about all programs. There was unanimous support for the LAP. Teachers feel they can't handle these students without support. It appears to administrators that they might be able to continue the program based on a PTR of 18.3 which would result in 1.7 LAP teachers. The rest of the second salary might be made up through the $600/student grant for special education. The final comment from administration was:

> *We have to keep on doing what we are doing for these students.*
>
> *Administrators*
> *Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School*

In closing, the story of Michal, an LAP student, is a vivid example of the success possible for students with learning disabilities in programs such as this. Michal has severe dyslexia and an inner ear problem and was misdiagnosed with everything from epilepsy to mental disabilities. With the help of his junior high teachers, a course at a private foundation and the support of the learning strategies teacher, Michal learned to read. He ran across Canada at the age of 16 to raise money for others with learning disabilities. His solo marathon, entitled *Run for the Missing Words*, began in St. John's, Newfoundland on March 19, 1993 and ended in Victoria, B.C. on October 10, 1993. As his father said, "It was a beautiful experience." There was a voluntary assembly at Scarlett when Michal ran through Calgary and stopped at the school. Teachers are still amazed at the sell-out attendance at the assembly and at the emotional response to the program. The students and staff collected $4,000 for his run.

Michal is planning to take sciences in university. A favourite quote of his from Antoine de Saint-Exupery seems to suit not only Michal but other students with learning disabilities as well:

> *"Goodbye," said the fox. "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."*
>
> *The Little Prince*
> *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

Attachment 1

Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School

School Report Outline

School Report Outline

- *Student identification info*
- *School history*
- *Medical/health/physical factors*
- *Family/social factors*
- *Behavioural factors*
- *Program interventions*
- *Diagnostic information*
- *Strengths and weaknesses profile*
- *Interests*
- *Educational needs and recommendations*
- *Summary*

Signed by
- *Principal*
- *Assistant Principal*
- *Parent/Guardian*
- *Student*

N.B. *There is a meeting with parent and staff to go over report at the end of year or when student leaves program. Student data is stored on disk.*

Chapter Four

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 Cross-case Analysis

After the case studies were completed for each of the six schools, they were returned to the relevant school staffs for corrections, additions and other changes they felt were necessary to accurately reflect their programs. Each of the school principals gave permission for the revised cases to be reproduced in this report.

Subsequently, a cross-case analysis was conducted which reviewed the Critical Integration Factors posited in Chapter 1 in terms of case-study findings in the field. Table 8 provides a summary of this analysis.

Table 8 Critical Integration Factors in Case-study Schools

Critical Factor	Grimshaw High School	Crestomere School	St. John's Junior High School	Bishop Savaryn School	G. R. Davis School	Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School
Jurisdictional Factors:						
1. Adequate Physical Resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Adequate Human Resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Adequate Training Resources	Limited training for regular teachers	Not for regular teachers	Yes	Yes	Not for regular teachers	Not for regular teachers
4. Written Policy on Integration	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
School-based Factors:						
5. Principal Support/ Involvement	No special involvement	Yes	Yes, extensive	Yes, extensive	No special involvement	Very supportive, no special involvement
6. Teacher Support/ Involvement	Limited	Limited	Extensive support and involvement	Yes	Very limited	Extensive support, limited involvement
7. Parent Involvement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, extensive
8. Written Policy/ Mission Statement at School Level	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 8 Critical Integration Factors in Case-study Schools

Critical Factor	Grimshaw High School	Crestomere School	St. John's Junior High School	Bishop Savaryn School	G. R. Davis School	Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School
9. Guidelines for Integration	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
10. Formal Communication Systems for Parents re: Integration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11. Formal Communication Systems for Teachers re: Integration	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
12. Reduced Class Size Where Students with Special Needs Integrated	No	No	No, but some peer support in class	No	No	No
13. Some Regular Teachers Trained in Special Education	No	No	Yes	No	One teacher had integration experience elsewhere	No
14. Regular Teachers Responsible for IPPs	No	No	Yes, but some resistance	Variable	Limited	No
15. Life Skills Program at High-school Level	IOP Junior High only	Work Experience Program	Limited	N/A	N/A	Yes, informally
16. Annual Planning Time for Integration	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
17. Weekly Planning Time for Integration	No	No	Some common prep time scheduled	Yes, cooperative prep time	No	No
18. Regular Students Prepared for Integration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No	No
19. Students with Special Needs Prepared for Integration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Each of the Critical Integration Factors listed above was summarized and some conclusions were drawn, as follows:

At the jurisdictional level:

- **Adequate Physical Resources Appear to be Available**

  At the time that the research was conducted (1993–1994), adequate physical resources were provided for students with disabilities. In all case-study schools, it appeared that facilities were modified as required and that adequate funds were available to provide appropriate physical facilities to meet students' instructional needs.

- **Human Resources Appear to be Shrinking**

  All schools had at least one teacher with training and/or experience in teaching special education. Human resources were deemed to be adequate for students with special needs as compared to those provided for regular students. Overall, however, it was evident that budgets were shrinking and pupil/teacher ratios were on the rise. St. John's experienced a decrease in special education personnel over three years from 4.0 FTE to 1.5 FTE. Towards the end of the study period, human resources at Dr. E. P. Scarlett's Learning Assistance Program were threatened but staff were able to make funding decisions to maintain the program. Over the course of the three phases of this study, significant decreases were observed in the amount of support provided at the jurisdictional level.

- **Jurisdictional Policies on Integration are being Developed**

  Policies at the jurisdictional level were in progress at the time of the case-study visits. Jurisdictions which revised their policies to reflect the new provincial policy on integration, prepared in 1993, included the County of Ponoka No. 3, the Fort McMurray Catholic School System and the Edmonton Catholic School Board.

- **Adequate Training on Integration Topics Is Not Provided for Regular Classroom Teachers**

  Training resources at the jurisdictional level were a significant issue for teachers in this study. While the jurisdictions appeared to provide some professional development activities/resources for special education teachers, there was limited or no training available related to integration topics for regular classroom teachers. Training for them was seen as optional in an environment moving rapidly towards integration. Their lack of expertise was one of the teachers' greatest fears. They felt that they needed additional training in special education topics, particularly in the academic assessment of students with special needs and in methods of program modification.

Where training did occur, it was school-based and instigated by the principal and his staff. At both St. John's Junior High and Bishop Savaryn, some creativity was evident regarding the professional development which could be provided in an environment of diminishing resources. Over a period of three or four years, they turned away from external experts towards the expertise available within their own schools and towards cooperative training activities. However, this joint professional development process over time was not shared by teachers who were new to the school. They had to scramble to catch up to the evolving school culture vis-à-vis integration. The lesson to be learned from Grimshaw High School was that inservice had to be relevant to a teacher's instructional needs **at that time**. While all junior high teachers were inserviced on working with students who were hard of hearing, only those who had the students in their classes that year benefited from the training.

At the school level:

- **Teacher Support/Involvement is the Key Factor**

Acceptance of the concept of integration remains varied but it is clear that teacher support and involvement in integration programming is critical. In a positive school environment where teachers have lived integration in their own classrooms, integration tends to be supported to a greater extent. Where there is no personal engagement on the part of teachers, their attitudes remain sceptical.

- **Principal Support/Involvement is Another Key Factor**

Second only to teacher support and involvement is that of the principal. Principal training and professional development was beneficial for program development at St. John's and Bishop Savaryn. Principals were able to translate what they learned into programming at the school level. At both Crestomere and Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the principals had training and experience in special education, a fact which should not be discounted in the development of a positive school environment regarding integration. In these four schools, stronger integration programming was definitely linked to principal training, ongoing support and, except for Scarlett, hands-on involvement. However, while principal support was a success factor, the experience at Bishop Savaryn suggests that without widespread regular classroom teacher support, programming will proceed more slowly.

- **Informal Communication with Parents Supports Integration Success**

All schools had formal communications with parents regarding IPPs and parents seemed to be satisfied with this role. However, more frequent informal communication was well received, particularly at St. John's, Dr. E. P. Scarlett and Crestomere, where teachers went out of their way to keep parents up-to-date on their children's successes as well as problems. Parent satisfaction appeared to be greater as a result.

- **School-based Visions, Policies and Infrastructures Support Integration Programming**

  Schools with clearly thought out visions and policies for integration were able to develop stronger infrastructures to support programming. However, policies and structures were not enough, as was demonstrated in Bishop Savaryn, where acceptance among teachers remained variable despite the carefully crafted vision, supported teacher planning and creative problem-solving methods.

- **Regular Classroom Teacher Preparation of IPPs Indicates a Transfer of Responsibility**

  Greater teacher ownership of integration programming exists where regular classroom teachers accept the responsibility for preparing IPPs. While this was the case at St. John's, teachers still reacted against the idea of more paperwork. Other schools had variable responsibility for IPP preparation.

- **More Development and Research is Required at the High-school Level**

  Further program development and research about integration models are required at the high-school level. At Crestomere, some success was experienced on a small scale with children at the upper elementary/junior high level, particularly when it came to work experience and life skills.

  At Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the LAP model supported integration without being integrated itself. It improved students' self-esteem as well as their academic development. Teachers noted that students' behaviour problems tended to dissipate as they experienced success in the regular classroom. Although these students experienced severe learning problems throughout their school careers, they could indeed learn, given the right strategies, supports and environment, giving the program an upbeat tone.

  For the medically fragile students at G. R. Davis, who had little hope of improvement and faced continued degeneration, the program reverted to basic comfort and security issues. So, while three models were observed, none of them could fit all students with disabilities at the high-school level.

- **Life Skills and Work Experience Programs also Require Development and Research**

  Life skills and work experience for students with disabilities still requires significant program development and research. Apart from an IOP class in Grimshaw, life skills and work experience programs appeared to be *ad hoc* in nature, reflecting the needs of specific students in a school. The tiny model in Crestomere (created for two students) had a lot of promise.

- **Assistant Involvement with Regular Students can be Beneficial**

  Assistant involvement in programming decisions was variable. Where students with severe disabilities were included in the study, their assistants seemed to have a great deal of control and often knew their students best. In other cases, where assistants worked alongside students integrated into regular classrooms, their role was less clear. Some tended to serve only the student to whom they were assigned, a more traditional approach to resource use. However, the assistants at G. R. Davis learned how effective a little attention or affection could be with students other than their charges.

- **Integration Programming Takes at Least Four Years to Develop**

  As found in the Yellowhead study, it takes time for the concept of integration to be accepted and implemented in a school. After four years of program development at St. John's, it appeared that a school-wide program was in place, that teachers were committed to the concept and that parents were registering satisfaction with the results. However, so many changes continued to occur, both within the school and beyond its walls, that program consolidation had not yet occurred. In a junior high setting, four years appeared to be a minimum period for program development.

- **Links can Develop Between Integration Programming, Resource Rooms and Learning Differentiation**

  In some of the case-study schools, the concept of integration was limited to students with severe disabilities. Resource room teachers often provided traditional pull-out programming which was unrelated to the regular classroom experience. Some dissatisfaction with this model was expressed, however, by both regular classroom teachers and resource room teachers because the model did not allow them to address the learning needs of all students. It appeared that schools which seriously addressed integration issues soon became aware of the shortcomings of the traditional resource room model and integration concepts began to generalize to all students. This was particularly evident at Dr. E. P. Scarlett where some regular classroom teachers began to apply learning strategies they first used with students with learning disabilities to other students in their classes.

  Some of the case-study schools explored changes to the resource room concept. At St. John's, resource room activities were integrated into regular classrooms. At Dr. E. P. Scarlett, the support program for students with learning disabilities worked in tandem with regular classroom activities. At Grimshaw High School, resource room activities tended to be short term and classroom related. G. R. Davis was planning to change resource room activities the following year. However, at Bishop Savaryn, where integration programming outstripped teacher support, the resource room tended to revert to traditional strategies.

- **Non-Integrated Programs can Successfully Support Integration**

  Two successful non-integrated programs were observed. The Grade 7 transition program at St. John's provided intensive remediation prior to reintegrating students into high school. The Learning Assistance Program at Dr. E. P. Scarlett acted as an adjunct program while students with learning disabilities were enrolled in regular classes. Both programs supported successful integration.

- **A Model for Medically Fragile Students Does Exist**

  While the Yellowhead study did not provide the opportunity to observe medically fragile students in a school setting, G. R. Davis did have such a program. Legal and safety issues related to medically fragile students were addressed at G. R. Davis. Medications were dispensed by the assistants who were trained by staff at the health centre and letters were on file giving the school permission to store and administer the medications. In addition, one assistant was trained by a parent to tube feed a student several times a day. The health centre, where several of the students lived, was nearby should an emergency occur. While public and staff acceptance of these students remained mixed, student acceptance was evident. After only two years, school support for integration was more positive than that in the school next door.

Some conclusions were also drawn regarding the frequency of factor occurrence, as follows:

Prevalent Critical Integration Factors	Adequate physical resources Adequate human resources Parent involvement Formal communication systems for parents re: integration Students with special needs prepared for integration
Critical Factors Frequently Present	Written policy on integration (jurisdiction level) Principal support/involvement Formal communication systems for teachers re: integration Life skills programs at high school level (though may be informal) Regular students prepared for integration

Critical Factors Infrequently Present

- Training for regular classroom teachers in integration
- Teacher support/involvement
- Written policy/mission statement (school level)
- Guidelines for integration (school level)
- Some regular teachers trained in special education
- Regular teachers responsible for IPPs
- Annual planning time for integration
- Weekly planning time for integration

Critical Factors Never Present

- Reduced class size where students with special needs integrated

It was concluded that all six schools were in a developmental phase in varying degrees. None yet represented a fully consolidated integration model. The school which was at the earliest stage of integration development, Grimshaw High School, already had seven factors present while the two schools furthest along the continuum of integration, Bishop Savaryn School and St. John's Junior High School, had between 15 and 17 of the 19 possible factors present to some extent.

In Phase 2 the question was raised *"If adequate human and physical resources are available in the jurisdiction to support integration, why are the school-based strategies recommended in the literature not widely in practice at the school level?"* The findings of Phase 3 begin to shed light on this issue. The school-based Critical Integration Factors are varied in the degree of impact they have on integration programming and some appear to be sequential in order. It would seem that if a school has teacher support and principal support for integration, many of the other factors will fall into place given the third major factor — adequate time. Four years appears to be the minimum period for program development to occur. In an environment where the jurisdiction provides its critical resources, successful integration in the school appears to hinge on teacher and principal support and adequate time for program development.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussion

The schools which became part of the case-study research were at varying levels of development with regard to integration as described in the literature or as implemented in the Yellowhead School Division No. 12, which was reported separately and acted as a precursor to the current study. In actual fact, none of the schools in the study provided a complete model for integration. As a result, the working title of this report *Supporting Integration: Strategies that Work* was replaced with a title more appropriate to findings: *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta.*

The school which was closest to developing an integration model was St. John's Junior High School in Fort McMurray, where all but a handful of students in the Grade 7 transition program were integrated. St. John's was a school humming with new ideas, innovative programs and creative solutions to problems created by decreasing resources. Its halls and classrooms were also buzzing and its overworked staff demonstrated incredible commitment, patience and tenacity. It was, however, still a work in progress as all ideas had not been fully explored or completely implemented. Program change was still frequent as staff members grappled with emerging problems.

At Bishop Savaryn School in Edmonton, the principal's leadership and clear vision created a sound framework for an integration program. The planning mechanisms which were established were strong and well received. While this principal, like the one at St. John's, was committed to the philosophy of integration, he had not yet obtained the same level of staff commitment across the school. While teachers who experienced integration in their own classrooms were committed, others were more sceptical. The resource room reverted to a more traditional model after a year of extensive change. However, while setbacks were experienced, the vision remained intact. Perhaps the lesson to be learned from the experience at this school is that trying to make too many changes too quickly can result in the need to tread gently for a time.

On a small scale, the integration activities occurring at Crestomere School for two students with disabilities were promising. While manpower needs were intensive, the evident satisfaction of all stakeholders, and most particularly the students, made this a model worth exploring further. However, the school also had a traditional resource room program as well. Further program development was required as were strategies to collaborate with regular classroom teachers.

The Learning Assistance Program at Dr. E. P. Scarlett High School in Calgary was not an example of integration at all but rather demonstrated how successful a so-called pull-out program could be under the right circumstances. The goal of the LAP was to be as invisible as possible so that its students would not be singled out by their peers. This goal was well achieved except for the unanticipated interest that regular students demonstrated in learning disabilities. The model which developed at Scarlett was one which worked particularly well in a senior high setting where each student had an individualized timetable. It was easy to schedule a student into Learning Assistance for one period a day. The program could then act as a support and adjunct to the student's regular programming. Collaboration with regular classroom teachers and families worked well and all stakeholders agreed that the program was enabling students with long histories of learning problems to not only succeed but excel.

The situation at G. R. Davis was unique in that integration was thrust on the school by the community. In this case, the students who were integrated were severely disabled and medically fragile. Originally most of them lived in an institution to care for their needs but over time the population changed to an extent to include some students who lived at home but their disabilities were just as severe. Skills they acquired early in the program were no longer apparent as the principal explained, remembering when one of the wheelchair-bound students was able to run in the playing field. Benefits did remain on both sides, however. Regular students were more attuned to the needs of students with disabilities and the students with special needs loved being with the children, rather than in the sterile environment of the health centre. While community and staff feelings were very strong, these moderated in most cases although some resentment remained about perceived funding inequities. Interestingly, the traditional resource room program proceeded unchanged up until the time of the case study and was only under review in the Spring of 1994, despite the fact that this school was situated within a jurisdiction which strongly supported the concept of integration. A more effective use of the resource room teacher might have been a roving classroom support teacher, similar to those in the Yellowhead School Division.

Grimshaw High School also found itself responding to integration because of changes in the community but the situation was not as highly charged as that faced by G. R. Davis. The school had a fledgling integration program which rested fully on the shoulders of the special education teacher and she was stretched to the limit. While some students with disabilities were integrated, others were not. Still others attended the IOP and/or the resource room. The program lacked a clear vision about what the school was trying to accomplish for students with special needs and was responding on an *ad hoc* basis to the needs of students in their community.

All of the schools shared an environment of uncertainty and diminishing resources as these case studies were conducted yet overall the commitment remained firm to address the needs of students with special needs in as effective a way as possible. The willingness of school staff, students and parents and of jurisdiction personnel to undergo the scrutiny involved in this enterprise demonstrated this basic desire for improvement. As the principals and teachers involved in this study read each others' case studies, they may get some ideas about "what to do next" and all programs will improve as a result. Hopefully, the information will be useful to other schools as well as they continually strive to "do it better."

Conclusions

To conclude, it is useful to consider that while all six schools had integration programs which were considered to be developmental in nature, all six schools also had more critical factors in place than the provincial norm depicted by findings in Phase 2 of this study. This supported the initial premise of case-study school selection, namely that these schools represented exemplary practices.
In particular, three of the four Critical Integration Factors at the jurisdictional level were more evident in the six case-study schools' jurisdictions in Phase 3 than as reported by most provincial jurisdictions in Phase 2. Specifically:

- Physical resources were judged to be adequate at all sites (compared to 58% of jurisdictions reporting that this factor was frequently present).

- Human resources were judged to be adequate at all sites (compared to 57% of jurisdictions reporting that this factor was frequently present).

- Four of the six jurisdictions involved in Phase 3 had an integration policy in place. This was not measured in Phase 2 as it occurred during the period when the Province of Alberta was in transition regarding the development of an integration policy. The four jurisdictions with integration policies developed them since 1992.

The last jurisdiction-based Critical Integration Factor was as poorly represented in the case-study schools as it was in schools province-wide in Phase 2. Training of regular classroom teachers on integration topics was only provided in one-third of the schools.

Seven of the 15 school-based Critical Integration Factors were present more frequently at the school level in Phase 3 case-study schools than as reported by most provincial school jurisdictions in Phase 2:

- Parent involvement in integration activities occurred in all six case-study schools (compared to 28% of elementary and 14% of secondary schools reporting this factor frequently present overall).

- Students with special needs were prepared for integration in all case-study schools (compared to 32% of elementary and 19% of secondary schools overall).

- Principal support/involvement occurred in four of the six case-study schools (compared to 43% of elementary and 22% of secondary schools overall).

- Formal communication systems for teachers to discuss integration were present in four of the six case-study schools (compared to 42% of elementary and 18% of secondary schools overall).

- Regular students were prepared for the integration of students with special needs in four of the six case-study schools (compared to 25% of elementary schools and 15% of secondary schools overall).

- Teacher support/involvement for integration was only observed in three of the six case-study schools yet this was significantly better than findings in **Phase 2** (40% of elementary and 21% of secondary schools reported this factor frequently present).

- Life skills programs were present in two of the four case-study secondary schools (compared to 11% of secondary schools overall).

Other school-based Critical Integration Factors remained poorly represented in the case-study schools although more likely to be present in the stronger integration models. These included:

- A written policy/mission statement at the school level
- Guidelines for integration
- Some regular teachers trained in special education
- Regular classroom teachers responsible for IPP preparation
- Weekly planning time for integration
- Annual planning time for integration.

No case-study schools had reduced class sizes where students with special needs were integrated (compared to 13% of elementary and 7% of secondary schools overall). This difference likely reflected diminishing resources as opposed to a philosophical shift in schools.

It must be noted that the study occurred over a particularly volatile four-year period, as described above, and findings must be reviewed in the context of continually diminishing resources and major policy change. Even as the case studies were being conducted, major changes to educational funding were announced. If one were to return to these schools next year, programming might be significantly different and some schools might even be closed. However, the researcher is convinced that the teachers and administrators described in these case studies will continue to meet the needs of these students to the best of their abilities. Adversity will only press them to be more creative than ever. The students continue to amaze us with their sensitivity and humour and we can all continue to learn from them no matter what the environment.

Recommendations

It appears that these case studies have advanced our understanding to some extent with regard to these integration themes. While it is not the intention of the researcher to advocate a boiler-plate approach to integration, it is apparent that programs work better when more of the Critical Integration Factors are in place than when they are not. The conclusion drawn in this report that these six schools have integration models which are still developmental indicates that there is more work to be done provincially in terms of integration program development.

In closing, a few general recommendations are advanced for consideration:

- Training must be provided for regular classroom teachers prior to and once involved in integration activities. Many of their attitudes are forged by fear of the unknown. A strategy-based approach is likely to be most effective and teacher visitations should be strongly encouraged.

- Schools embarking on an integration course must develop their own vision of what they are trying to achieve. This vision or mission statement should then be supported by written guidelines for integration developed by the school staff.

- Joint planning time must be engineered for teachers who share a student with special needs or between a regular classroom teacher and a teacher trained in integration techniques. Case-study schools proved that this can be done creatively despite the lack of extra funds to support this activity. In addition, annual planning activities which focus on integration strengthen programming significantly.

- Teachers trained in special education who are teaching in regular classrooms provide strength to a school considering an integrated program. Schools should be encouraged to use the professional expertise at their fingertips.

- A school's integration program is greatly enhanced and program ownership is more likely when regular classroom teachers take responsibility for developing IPPs. Special education or resource room teachers should provide expert advice, but the classroom teacher must have final responsibility for the IPP and its implementation.

- Reduced class size where students with special needs were integrated was not present in any of the case-study schools and is unlikely to occur in the near future. Consideration must be given to creative ways of deploying staff and of timetabling teachers' workloads to accommodate integration issues. Several useful examples are provided in the case studies of St. John's Junior High and Bishop Savaryn School.

- Further program development and research is required to explore models for addressing the needs of students with disabilities at the high-school level, particularly in senior high. Further, work experience and life skills programs for students with disabilities at the high-school level need to be reported more broadly. Finally, the correlation of factor occurrence with program development suggests that the list of Critical Integration Factors warrants further research.

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Appendix 1

TELEPHONE SURVEY INSTRUMENT — PHASE 1

ALTAED\TELEPHON.SUR

Superintendent: **Jurisdiction:** **I.D. #**

I will now read the six questions. Please answer Yes or No to each after I finish reading the statement. If you need me to re-read the statement or to clarify any parts of the question, please ask and I will be happy to do so. We welcome any comments you may have on these issues so feel free to comment after you have provided us with your answer.

1. **Has there been any change in the last two years in how your school jurisdiction approaches the education of students with special needs?** **If yes, can you describe that change?**	___ Yes (1) ___ No (2) ___ Uncertain (3)
Comments:	
2a. **Are there any schools in Divisions I and II where children with special needs spend more than 50% of their day in the regular classroom?** **If yes, what proportion (percentage) of students with special needs are integrated more than 50% of their day?** ____ %	___ Yes ___ No ___ Uncertain
2b. **In Divisions III and IV?** **If yes, what proportion (percentage) of students with special needs are integrated more than 50% of their day?** ____ %	___ Yes ___ No ___ Uncertain
Comments:	
3. **Would you say there is support for integration in your jurisdiction at the school level (i.e., amongst teachers)?**	___ Yes (1) ___ No (2) ___ Uncertain (3)
Comments:	

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4. Does your school jurisdiction have a written policy regarding integration at the board level?	___ Yes (1) ___ No (2) ___ Uncertain (3)
Comments:	

5. If yes (to #4), were teachers in your school jurisdiction active in the planning of that integration policy?	___ Yes (1) ___ No (2) ___ Uncertain (3)
Comments:	

6. Have teachers in your jurisdiction received inservice training related to integration?	___ Yes (1) ___ No (2) ___ Uncertain (3)
Comments:	

Conclusion:

If respondent answered ***No*** *to all parts of Item 2.*

That concludes our part of the survey. Are there any final comments you would like to make?

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to participate. The information you have provided will be very helpful in directing the future of integration planning in the province.

*If respondent answered **Yes** to any part of Item 2.*

As I stated earlier, Phase 2 of this project involves a more detailed exploration of the specific integration practices occurring in the Province's schools. Phase 2 would involve a short checklist that would be mailed to you shortly after Christmas. Would you be interested in participating in this part of our study?

___ Yes (1) ___ No (2)

If yes, are you the appropriate person to address the survey to?

___ Yes (1) ___ No (2)

If no,

Name:	
Position:	
Address: **(if different)**	

That concludes our part of the survey. Are there any final comments you would like to make?

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to participate. The information you have provided will be very helpful in directing the future of integration planning in the province.

Appendix 2

SURVEY INSTRUMENT — PHASE 2

Integration Factors Checklist

The attached checklist has been developed to provide Alberta Education with a profile of current integration activities which are occurring in Alberta schools.

The checklist consists of critical factors identified in recent research as being associated with the successful implementation of integration practices (Barrington, G. V., 1991; Alberta Education, 1990; Rubadeau, 1989). Please respond to each item by indicating the degree to which the identified activity is evident in schools in your jurisdiction. Please mark the appropriate estimate beside each statement or indicate if you don't know the extent to which the particular factor exists.

Example:

CRITICAL FACTORS	Division	SCALE					
		None	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Unknown
1. Principals verbally support integration.	I & II				✓		
	III & IV		✓				

To begin the survey, we would like to ask a few general questions regarding your jurisdiction as a whole.

1. Would you describe your school jurisdiction as being supportive of the concept of integration?
   ___ Yes (1)
   ___ No (2)

2. Does your school jurisdiction have a written policy regarding integration at the board level?
   ___ Yes (1)
   ___ No (2)

3. In general, are teachers in your school jurisdiction active in policy planning at the district level?
   ___ Yes (1)
   ___ No (2)

Section A: Policy Development Issues

The following section outlines various policy development issues which have been found to be associated with the success of integration programs. Please indicate for what proportion of schools in your jurisdiction the following statements apply.

CRITICAL FACTORS	Division	SCALE					
		None	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Unknown
1. Principals verbally support integration.	I & II						
	III & IV						
2. Principals support the principles of integration in their daily activities.	I & II						
	III & IV						
3. Teachers verbally support integration.	I & II						
	III & IV						
4. Teachers support the principles of integration in their daily activities.	I & II						
	III & IV						
5. Parents are involved in integration planning.	I & II						
	III & IV						
6. A written policy mission statement on integration exists at the school level.	I & II						
	III & IV						
7. Written goals regarding integration exist at the school level.	I & II						
	III & IV						

Section B: Policy Implementation Issues

The following section outlines various policy implementation issues which have been found to be associated with the success of integration programs. Please indicate for which proportion of schools in your jurisdiction the following statements apply.

CRITICAL FACTORS	Division	SCALE					
		None	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Unknown
1. Regular consultation occurs between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers.	I & II						
	III & IV						
2. Communication mechanisms exist between regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, parents, assistants and school administrators to discuss integration issues.	I & II						
	III & IV						
3. Students in the regular classroom are prepared for the experience of having students with special needs integrated in the classroom.	I & II						
	III & IV						
4. Students with special needs are prepared for the experience of being integrated into the regular classroom.	I & II						
	III & IV						
5. Class sizes are reduced for classrooms where integrated pupils have been placed.	I & II						
	III & IV						
6. Clear guidelines exist regarding the use of pull-out instruction.	I & II						
	III & IV						
7. Clear guidelines exist to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom.	I & II						
	III & IV						
8. Adequate pre-planning time is available for teachers prior to the integration of students with special needs into the regular classroom.	I & II						
	III & IV						
9. Adequate weekly preparation time is available for teachers to develop lesson plans which will accommodate all students in the integrated classroom.	I & II						
	III & IV						

CRITICAL FACTORS	Division	SCALE					
		None	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Unknown
10. Regular classroom teachers have the final responsibility for preparation of IPPs although they receive input from special education teachers, parents, assistants, counsellors and administrators.	I & II						
	III & IV						
11. Early identification programs for detecting learning difficulties are available at the pre-school level.	I & II						
	III & IV						
12. Specialized life skills programs are available for integrated students at the high-school level.	I & II						
	III & IV						

Section C: Resources/Support Services

The following section refers to the resource and support service availability that may be available to schools in your jurisdiction. Please indicate for what proportion of schools in your district the following statements apply.

CRITICAL FACTORS	Division	SCALE					
		None	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Unknown
1. The materials and equipment necessary to accommodate integrated students are obtainable as needed.	I & II						
	III & IV						
2. Appropriate building accommodations or retro-fitting are obtainable as needed.	I & II						
	III & IV						
3. Adequate transportation resources are available for handicapped students.	I & II						
	III & IV						
4. Trained special education specialists consultants are available in the school.	I & II						
	III & IV						
5. Trained special education specialists consultants are available at central office.	I & II						
	III & IV						
6. Relevant community resources (e.g., Health Unit Alberta Family & Social Services) can be easily accessed by teachers.	I & II						
	III & IV						
7. Teacher inservices have been provided on theories and concepts related to integration.	I & II						
	III & IV						
8. Teacher inservices have been provided on practical classroom strategies relevant to integration.	I & II						
	III & IV						
9. Orientation sessions on integration issues are available to new teachers entering your system.	I & II						
	III & IV						

Please use the following space to comment on other factors or activities that you have identified as having an impact on successful integration practices in your school jurisdiction.

____

____

____

Once the data from this survey has been collected and analyzed, Alberta Education would like to expand the study to include case-study analysis of a selection of schools that are demonstrating exemplary practices in the area of integration.

Please indicate below the names of schools in your jurisdiction that you feel exemplify a majority of the critical integration factors outlined in this checklist. A cross section of schools identified through this process will comprise Phase 2 of this project if school staff are willing to be involved.

School Name and Address	Principal	Phone #

References:

Alberta Education (1992). *Integrated services review. Yellowhead School Division No. 12.* Edmonton, AB: Education Response Centre.

Alberta Education (1990). *Integrating exceptional students into the mainstream: Literature review.* Edmonton, AB: Education Response Centre.

Rubadeau, R. (1989). *Checklist of factors associated with the successful integration of special needs children in neighborhood schools* (adapted from Sanche, 1989).

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW FORMATS — PHASE 3

Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work

Phase 3 — Case-study Schools

Interview Protocol: School Administration

I.D.#:	**Position:**

1.0 Historical Context

1.1 Policy Development

1.1.1.1 What involvement did you have in the development of an integration policy for your school/school district?

1.1.1.3 What involvement did the community have in the development of an integration policy?

1.3 School and Community Environment

Can you explain the school philosophy/attitudes/values with regard to integration?

2.0 Implementation Process

2.1 Preparation and Planning

2.1.1 How much annual pre-planning time is available for teachers to prepare/plan for integration?

2.1.2 How much weekly preparation time is available for teachers to prepare for integration?

2.2 Resources and Support Services

2.2.3 What inservice/training resources have been made available to teachers to prepare them for integration?

2.2.4 Please describe any facility modifications/retro-fitting that have been undertaken to accommodate integrated students? How were these financed/What funding is available for this purpose?

2.2.5 What transportation services are available to assist integrated students in getting to and from school?

2.3 Communication Systems

2.3.1.1 How would you characterize communication between yourself and senior administration/the school board?

2.3.1.2 . . . between yourself and teachers/staff in the school?

2.3.2 Who all is involved in the decision-making process for individual student cases/situations in your school?

2.5 Methods and Procedures

2.5.1 What programs/services are available in your district for early identification of special needs?

2.5.2 What provisions are made to reduce class sizes when an integrated placement has been made?

2.5.3 Please describe the systems/procedures for evaluating and reporting student progress in your school.

3.0 Program Outcomes

3.1.1 What changes have you observed in integrated students regarding:

3.1.1.1 a) academic achievement

3.1.1.2 b) behavioural/social considerations

3.1.3 How would you describe your attitude now towards integration? Has it changed?

3.1.4 Have you observed any other changes in the school resulting from integration (e.g., on personnel, resources, climate, etc.)?

3.4.1 What has been the overall impact(s) of integration on the community?

3.2 Has anything happened as a result of integration that was not expected?

3.3 What issues regarding integration do you feel still need to be addressed?

Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work

Phase 3 — Case-study Schools

Policy Checklist

Please indicate the clarity to which a policy statement/guideline exists in the following areas:

1.1... **Policies:**

.2.1 Student identification process

.2.1 Student assessment process

.2.2 Placement considerations

Age appropriateness

Program availability

Student ratio (special needs vs non-special needs)

Other (describe):

.2.3 Roles/responsibilities regarding integration

.2.4 Student/parent consultation/involvement

.2.5 Facilities/retro-fitting

.2.6 Transportation resources

.2.7 Management of student records

.2.7 Conflict resolution/appeals

1.2... **Guidelines/Procedures:**

.1 Planning for instruction

.2 Behaviour problems

.3 Referral/assessment

.4 IPP development/timelines/monitoring

Please indicate the clarity to which a policy statement/guideline exists in the following areas:

1.2... **Guidelines/Procedures (continued):**

.5 Student evaluation ____________________

.6 Parent/guardian consultation ____________________

.7 Staff consultation time ____________________

Comments/Observations:

Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work

Phase 3 — Case-study Schools

Individualized Program Plan (IPP) Checklist

Please indicate the clarity to which each of the following elements exists in the student IPP:

Involvement in IPP development:

Principal ____________________

Teacher ____________________

Parent ____________________

Student ____________________

Other (specify) ____________________

Involvement in student's program

Principal ____________________

Teacher ____________________

Parent ____________________

Other (specify) ____________________

Current/relevant assessment data ____________________

Modified evaluation/review methods ____________________

Evaluation/review dates ____________________

Modified reporting strategies ____________________

Circumstances calling for assessment/ reassessment ____________________

Areas of student strength ____________________

Areas of student weakness ____________________

Annual student goals ____________________

Short-term student objectives ____________________

Specific intervention strategies ____________________

Specific instructional considerations ____________________

Please indicate the clarity to which each of the following elements exists in the student IPP:

Use of support materials/resources ____________________

Methods/strategies to promote peer interaction ____________________

Methods/strategies to deal with behaviour problems ____________________

Comments/Observations:

Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work

Phase 3 — Case-study Schools

Parent Focus Group Format

1.0 Historical Context

1.3.1.4 How did this school come to adopt integrated/inclusive education? What involvement did you have in the process/decision?

2.0 Implementation Process

2.3.1.3 How does the school involve you in your child's program?

3.0 Program Outcomes & Impacts

3.1.1 What changes have you noticed in your child as a result of integration? (. . . since the school adopted integration?; . . . since s/he has been in an integrated classroom?; . . . since September?)

3.4.1 What long-term impacts has integration had on your family?

. . . on your community?

Supporting Integration: Strategies That Work

Phase 3 — Case-study Schools

Interview Protocol: School-based Staff

I.D.#	**Position:**

1.0 Historical Context

1.1 Policy Development

1.1 Do you have an integration policy in your school/school district? Have you seen it?

1.1.1 What involvement did you have in its development?

1.3 School and Community Environment

1.3.1 Can you explain the school philosophy/attitudes/values with regard to integration?

2.0 Implementation Process

2.3 Communication Systems

2.3.2.1 Who is involved in the decision-making process for placement of students with special needs in your school?

2.3.2.2 Who is involved in the decision-making process for programming for students with special needs in your school?

2.3.1 How do you communicate about integration-related issues in your school?

2.1 Preparation and Planning

Are students prepared for classroom integration? If so, how are they prepared?

2.1.3.1 Students with special needs:

2.1.3.2 Regular classroom students:

2.4 IPP Process/Program Modification

2.4.1 Who develops the student IPP?

☐ = Teaching Classroom Personnel Only

2.5 Methods and Procedures

2.5.1 Describe the range of placement options for students with special needs in your school (i.e., full-time placement in regular classroom through to self-contained classroom)

2.5.2 How do you modify student programs for students with special needs?

2.5.3 Please describe the procedures for reporting student progress in your school/class (e.g., report cards, newsletters, portfolios, etc.).

2.2 Resources and Support Services

2.2.1 What internal/classroom resources are available in your school to support integration (e.g., support personnel, materials, supplies, etc.)?

2.2.2 What external resources are available to assist/accommodate integration practices in this school?

2.2.3 What training/inservice activities related to integration have been provided this year? . . . last year?

3.0 Program Outcomes and Impacts

3.1.1 What changes have you observed in integrated students regarding:

3.1.1.1 a) academic achievement

3.1.1.2 b) behavioural/social considerations

3.1.2.1 How have your own teaching practices/skills changed as a result of inclusive/integrated education?

3.1.3 How would you describe your attitude towards integration now? Has it changed?

3.1.4 Have you observed any other changes in the school resulting from integration (e.g., on personnel, resources, climate, etc.)?

3.4.1 What has been the overall impact(s) of integration on the community?

3.2 Has anything happened as a result of integration that was not expected?

3.3 What issues regarding integration do you feel still need to be addressed?

☐ = Teaching Classroom Personnel Only

Alberta
EDUCATION

SUPPORTING INTEGRATION:

WORK IN PROGRESS IN ALBERTA

Executive Summary
1995

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SUPPORTING INTEGRATION:

WORK IN PROGRESS IN ALBERTA

Executive Summary 1995

Report to the Special Education Branch of Alberta Education

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In addition, a special thank you is extended to the Special Education Branch of Alberta Education for funding, continued interest in the project and assistance and support in collecting the data and visiting the case-study schools.

The students described in these case studies are real. Their names have been changed to protect them with the exception of Michal, already an advocate for students with learning disabilities, who gave permission for his name to be used. Their warmth, humour and patience are examples to us all.

Finally, thanks to our research team who, as always, approached the study with enthusiasm and professionalism: Carole Brownlees, Linda Skuce and Martin Bennett.

Gail V. Barrington, PhD, CMC
Principal Researcher

Introduction

In 1991, the Special Education Branch of Alberta Education commissioned a three-part study to explore integration practices across Alberta. The research was conducted by Gail V. Barrington & Associates Inc.. The final report, *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress in Alberta* (December 1995), provides a comprehensive description of all phases of the research, and includes conclusions and recommendations. To obtain copies of the full report, see page 5 of this *Executive Summary*.

Research Phases

- Phase 1 (1991–92), *Jurisdiction Screening Survey*, was a telephone survey of all superintendents in the province to determine an overview of integration practices.
- Phase 2 (1992), *Jurisdiction Practices*, was a mail-out survey to superintendents and their special education designates regarding the nature and extent of integration practices.
- Phase 3 (1993–94), *Supporting Integration: Work in Progress*, involved the development of six case studies of schools selected across the province and provided detailed descriptive information obtained through on-site observation, staff, parent and student interviews and document review.

Research Findings

Based on a literature review and findings from the phases of this research, factors (referred to as *Critical Integration Factors*) were identified that, if present on a consistent basis, are associated with greater success for students in an integrated environment. Brief descriptions of these factors, grouped according to whether they are relevant at the school jurisdiction level or the school level, follow. (For detailed descriptions of each, please refer to the full report.)

At the **school jurisdiction level** , the following factors were found to be associated with greater success for students in an integrated environment:

- adequate physical resources
- adequate human resources
- adequate training for regular classroom teachers
- written policy on integration.

At the **school level**, the following factors were associated with greater success for students in an integrated environment:

- principal support/involvement
- teacher support/involvement
- parent involvement
- written policy/mission statement
- guidelines for integration
- formal communication systems about integration, for parents
- formal communication systems about integration, for teachers
- reduced class size where students with special needs were integrated
- some regular teachers trained in special education
- regular teachers responsible for Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)
- life skills programs at the high-school level
- annual planning time for integration
- weekly planning time for integration
- regular students prepared for integration
- students with special needs prepared for integration.

The researcher also draws some conclusions regarding the **frequency of occurrence** (how often factors were found to be present in the study) of the above factors.

- Factors that were found to **occur most often** were:
  - adequate physical resources
  - adequate human resources
  - parent involvement
  - formal communication systems about integration, for parents
  - students with special needs prepared for integration.

- Factors that were found to be **frequently present** were:
  - written policy on integration (jurisdiction level)
  - principal support/involvement
  - formal communication systems about integration, for teachers
  - life skills programs at high-school level (though may be informal)
  - regular students prepared for integration.

- Factors that were **infrequently present** were:
  - adequate training for regular classroom teachers
  - teacher support/involvement
  - written policy/mission statement (school level)
  - guidelines for integration (school level)
  - some regular teachers trained in special education
  - regular teachers responsible for IPPs
  - annual planning time for integration
  - weekly planning time for integration.

- A factor that was **never present** was:
  - reduced class size where students with special needs were integrated.

Conclusions

The researcher draws the following conclusions:

- All six case-study schools were in a developmental phase, although to varying degrees — none yet represented a fully integrated model. The school at the earliest stage of integration development had seven Critical Integration Factors present, while the two schools furthest along the continuum of integration had 15 to 17 (of a possible 19) factors present to some extent.

- The initial premise of case-study school selection — that these schools represented best practices — was supported. All six schools had more Critical Integration Factors in place than the provincial norm depicted by findings in Phase 2 of the study. At the jurisdictional level, three of the four Critical Integration Factors were more evident. With regard to school-based factors, seven of the 15 Critical Integration Factors were present more frequently. Some school-based factors were poorly represented in the case-study schools.

- In an environment where the jurisdiction provides its critical resources, successful integration in the school appears to hinge on teacher and principal support, and adequate time for program development.

Recommendations

The researcher concludes that programs work better when more of the Critical Integration Factors are in place than when they are not. The finding that the six case-study schools have integration models which are still developmental indicates there is more work to be done provincially in terms of integration program development.

The researcher suggests the following:

- Training must be provided for regular classroom teachers prior to and once involved in integration activities. A strategy-based approach is likely to be most effective and teacher visitations should be strongly encouraged.
- Schools embarking on an integration course must develop their own vision of what they are trying to achieve. This vision or mission statement should then be supported by written guidelines for integration developed by the school staff.
- Joint planning time must be engineered for teachers who have joint responsibility for education of a student with special needs or between a regular classroom teacher and a teacher trained in integration techniques. Case-study schools have proven this can be done creatively, even without additional funding. In addition, annual planning activities that focus on integration strengthen programming significantly.
- Teachers trained in special education who are teaching in regular classrooms provide strength to a school considering an integrated program. Schools should be encouraged to use the professional expertise at their fingertips.
- A school's integration program is greatly enhanced and program ownership is more likely when regular classroom teachers take final responsibility for developing and implementing IPPs.
- Consideration must be given to creative ways of deploying staff and of timetabling teachers' workloads to accommodate integration issues. Examples are provided in the case studies.
- Further program development and research is required to explore models for addressing the needs of students with disabilities at the high-school level, particularly in senior high school. Further, work experience and life skills programs for students with disabilities at the high-school level need to be reported more broadly.